

EFFECTS OF RACIAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS
ON ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAMS

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1994

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Walter Thomas Johnsen, who encouraged me since early childhood to pursue my goals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee chairperson, Dr. Paul George, for all the time he spent reading, rereading, and counseling me on the writing of this dissertation. I would also like to thank Dr. Phil Clark, Dr. David Honeyman, and Dr. Ed Turner for serving on my committee. I am grateful to them for their time and assistance.

I must also acknowledge my deepest appreciation to the following people: my husband, George, for his steadfast reassurance, moral support, and the many hours he spent printing and editing this dissertation; my children, Jessica and Jordan, for many years of patience; my parents Walter and Lucila, and my very unique friend, Marion, for their faith in me; my in-laws, Georgette and Ralph, for always inquiring about my progress and offering their encouragement; and my sister Luci, who has been an inspiration. The love and encouragement of all my family and friends gave me the fortitude to see this endeavor through to its completion.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

EFFECTS OF RACIAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS
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April, 1994

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The purpose of this study was to examine the Advanced Placement (AP) program at two high schools to discover whether or not program differences could be explained by the racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level. One school is located in an affluent section of a large southeastern city and has a predominantly white student population. The other is located in an economically depressed area of the same city and has a predominantly African-American student population.

Case study methodology was used for this study and included interviews with students, faculty, and administrators at each school. In addition, classroom observations were conducted in each school, photographs of the schools were used in students' interviews to elicit students' responses to different facets of their school, and

data were gathered from students' standardized test scores, grade point averages, and AP exam results.

Interpretation of the results of this study revealed that the AP program served a different purpose at each school and that these differences were affected by the racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level. Differences in AP programs at the two schools included the following areas: criteria for admission to the AP program; level of student academic preparation previous to entering the AP program; amount of test preparation provided students for the AP exam; level of course difficulty; number of students taking and passing the AP exam; teachers' expectations of students' ability; students' evaluations of the AP program; and students' academic aspirations.

As a result of these differences, the predominantly white school's AP program provided students with college-level courses and preparation for the AP exam. The predominantly African-American school's AP program did not provide students with college-level work and provided only minimal AP exam preparation. However, it did help students upgrade their skills to enable them to succeed in freshman-level work after graduation.

Despite two very different AP programs, students at both schools were generally very positive in their descriptions and evaluations of the AP program and had high aspirations for their academic and professional attainments after high school. Students from both schools also benefited from participation in AP through advantages

in college admission, greater academic challenge, increased self-esteem, and improved academic skills.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Advanced Placement (AP) program evolved from the School and College Study of Admissions with Advanced Standing and from the School and College Study of General Education (Cornog, 1980). Both of these committees sought to eliminate lock-step in education and to provide able students the opportunity to receive intensive college preparatory instruction (Cornog, 1980).

The School and College Study of Admission with Advanced Standing first met in 1952 under the leadership of William Cornog. The committee consisted of presidents and deans from 12 institutions of higher learning and 12 principals and superintendents from secondary schools. The institutions represented were Bowdoin, Brown, Carleton, Haverford, Kenyon, MIT, Middlebury, Oberlin, Swarthmore, Wabash, Wesleyan, and Williams. The task before the committee was to define the standard of achievement for high school advanced courses in 11 subject areas. Completion of those courses would enable students to receive partial or full first-year credit by the 12 institutions represented in the committee. The committee reached consensus on this issue, as well as on the method of testing participants and grading the examinations (Cornog, 1989).

Meanwhile, the School and College Study of General Education convened. The committee participants were members of the faculties of Andover, Exeter,

Lawrenceville, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Their efforts culminated in a book, General Education in School and College, which was published in 1953 and formulated the concept of advanced placement (Cornog, 1980).

The AP program provides a means whereby qualified students may enroll in college-level work in secondary schools, take standard end-of-course examinations, and if successful, receive advanced standing with college credit (Willingham & Morris, 1986). Three essential elements have been incorporated into the AP program: detailed course outlines, a series of examinations offered once a year, and a national associational and staff network to carry out the work of the program and maintain communication among students, schools, and colleges (Willingham & Morris, 1986).

The AP program has become a major force in the enhancement of quality education for able students and is the most successful effort at producing a program to alleviate the structural rigidity of secondary schooling (Willingham & Morris, 1986). Evaluations of the AP program have typically been positive and have documented statistically the strong academic achievement of AP students, the largely positive accounts of students and faculty, the implementation of the program through content-valid examinations, high standards, and locally monitored college credit policies (Willingham & Morris, 1986).

However, despite the length of time the AP program has existed and its popularity, only a relatively few published research studies have appeared (LeMay, 1985). There is little research on the identification and program intervention of

gifted and talented students from culturally diverse and low socioeconomic environments (Patton, Prillaman, & Van Tassel-Baska, 1990). Philosophical and definitional considerations related to these neglected populations abound in the research literature but are often contradictory (Patton et al., 1990). Research is also lacking on the participation of African-American students in AP programs. This is significant because of the high failure rate of African-American students on AP examinations (Institute for Independent Education, 1989).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the continuing difficulty of making AP programs more racially and ethnically diverse. African Americans are underrepresented in AP programs and have a high failure rate on AP examinations. This study addressed the issue of the education received by African-American students in AP programs. Two schools with different racial and socioeconomic compositions were compared and contrasted in order to examine the consequences of program differences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the AP program at two high schools to discover whether or not program differences can be explained by the racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level. Two high schools were compared and contrasted to answer the following questions.

Research Questions

Questions pertinent to this research are listed below.

1. What are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?
2. To what extent is the implementation of those criteria consistent between the two schools?
3. How do students in the two AP programs compare in their previous academic preparation?
4. How do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?
5. How do the two schools compare in the teachers' implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?
6. What characterizes students' descriptions and evaluations of their AP classes at the two schools?
7. How do AP students' Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Test (ACT), grade point average (GPA), and AP examination scores compare at the two schools?
8. How do students' academic aspirations compare at the two schools?

Delimitations

This study contained five delimitations. The first delimitation was the inclusion in the study of only eleventh and twelfth-grade AP students. The second delimitation was the inclusion of only two AP classes at each school. The third delimitation was the inclusion of only two schools. The fourth delimitation was the selection of schools based on their racial and socioeconomic compositions. The fifth delimitation was the administration and interpretation of the interviews by a sole researcher.

Limitations

There were four limitations of this study. First, there was a limited body of available knowledge regarding African-American students in AP programs. Second, the study was limited to two AP classes in two schools. Therefore, generalizations could not be made about AP programs outside of the sample. Third, the generalizability of this study was further limited by the selection of subjects. Subjects were not randomly selected but came from four intact AP classes. A fourth limitation was a lack of control over intervening variables, such as student absence, that may have affected classroom interactions.

Assumptions

There were four assumptions upon which the study relied. First, the respondents answered honestly. Second, the researcher did not bias responses by

wording or ordering of question. Third, based on a review of available research on African-American AP students' scores on AP examinations, the researcher acknowledged a bias in her expectation that a small portion of students from the low socioeconomic school would pass the AP examination. The fourth assumption was that the limited number of observations of classroom events would not misrepresent the nature of opinions expressed during interviews or the curriculum presented in the classroom.

Methods

The researcher examined and described the AP program at two high schools to answer the broader question of whether the racial and socioeconomic composition of a school affects the AP program at that school. Case study methodology is appropriate to this study because case study is characterized by its focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon, which results in "thick" description of the phenomenon under study; because it is heuristic and illuminates the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study; and because it is inductive and results in the discovery of new relationships, concepts, and understanding (Merriam, 1988, pp. 11-13).

The case study researcher develops an understanding of the empirical data collected by embedding them with a holistic understanding of the specific situation and general background knowledge of the social phenomenon studied (Mathison, 1988). This study incorporated these characteristics of case study. The researcher

examined two specific AP programs in order to develop "thick" descriptions of those programs. Data was collected and analyzed in order to develop a holistic understanding of the AP program at the two schools studied and to discover and describe relationships between student achievement in the AP program and racial and socioeconomic factors.

Significance of the Study

Florida has one of the nation's highest rates of student participation in the AP program (Hanson, 1985). This is of benefit to Florida's educational system because research studies confirm that college-level studies in high school matched with appropriate placement at the college level lead to stronger programs at both levels (Hanson, 1985).

Enrollment in AP classes in the school district used in this study rose from 1,353 students in the 1981-1982 academic year to 3,706 students during the 1991-1992 academic year. These figures demonstrate the number of students taking AP courses more than doubled in the past 10 years. However, African-American students remain underrepresented in AP classes in this county (Hennessy, 1992).

In 1991-1992, 59% of the student enrollment in this county was white, yet whites represented 70% of students in AP classes. Asians composed 2.5% of the school population, but 10% of the AP enrollment. African Americans represented 37% of the school population and only 17% of the AP enrollment (Hennessy, 1992). Despite the underrepresentation of African-American students in AP classes in the

county used in this study, their enrollment has increased. In 1982, only five African-American students were enrolled in AP classes. By 1987, that number had increased to 546 students (Sang, 1987).

Starting college with a large number of AP credits was found to be the best predictor of outstanding academic achievement (Brody, Assouline, & Stanley, 1990). Therefore, the increase in African-American participation in the AP program is a positive factor in African-American academic progress. However, in view of the large African-American failure rate on the AP exam, this study to examine AP programs in schools with differing racial and socioeconomic compositions is timely and relevant.

Definition of Terms

Student Statewide Assessment Test I (SSAT I). The SSAT I is a basic skills test in reading, writing, and mathematics administered to third, fifth, eighth, and tenth-grade students. The Florida Legislature mandated that students must pass this test before being promoted to the next grade.

Student Statewide Assessment Test II (SSAT II). The SSAT II is a basic skills test in reading, writing, mathematics, and an ability to apply these skills to daily life. The SSAT II is administered to eleventh and twelfth-grade students. Students must pass this test to receive a regular high school diploma.

Overview

The following four chapters will include a review of the literature, the methodology, the findings, and the conclusions and implications. Chapter 2 will contain research findings on issues related to advanced placement and minority participation. Chapter 3 will discuss the selected research methods. Chapter 4 will report on the results of findings from the study. Chapter 5 will report on the conclusions and implications for further research.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of the literature is divided into three sections. The first section introduces and describes the AP program. The subsections include the AP program defined; growth of the AP program; AP and college admission; African Americans and college admission and attendance; and advanced academic programs in Florida. This section provides a framework for understanding the academic significance of the AP program.

The second section describes minority participation in the AP programs. Subsections include the status of minority participation in the AP program; problems that affect minority participation in AP programs; and examples of AP programs that focus on minority participation. The information in this section demonstrates the timeliness of this study on African-American participation in AP.

The third section of the review of the literature summarizes current research on high achieving African-American students. Subsections include effects of familial factors on academic achievement; effects of socioeconomic factors on academic achievement; conflicts experienced by high achieving African-American students; and the effects of tracking on academic achievement. This section identifies factors that

contribute to high achievement in African-American AP students in differing racial and socioeconomic school environments. "By directing attention to students who are successful in educational terms . . . we approach the question of race differences in academic achievement from a more positive vantage point than is typical of research in this area" (Lee, Winfield, & Wilson, 1991, p. 66). This section also provides a research basis for differentiating between the academic achievement of African-American students in AP programs and the general African-American student population.

Advanced Placement

Advanced Placement Defined

Advanced Placement is a curricular option for academically superior eleventh and twelfth-grade students. Courses offered in the program are more demanding of time and intellectual skill than corresponding courses in the regular high school curriculum (Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1988). The goal of the AP program is to accelerate the educational process so that high school students may complete college-level work (Maeroff, 1983). Advanced Placement courses are provided for almost all academic subjects (Strueber, 1983).

Advanced Placement programs often overlap with gifted and talented programs. However, students whose academic backgrounds have prepared them for rigorous coursework may enroll in AP programs whether or not they are technically defined as gifted (Oakes & Lipton, 1990, p. 204).

A major objective of the curriculum in each course is to prepare students for the AP examinations (Oakes & Lipton, 1990, p. 204). The AP examinations, prepared by the Educational Testing Service and sponsored by the College Board, were first administered to high school students in May, 1955. Students must receive a minimum score of 3 out of 5 possible points on AP examinations to be awarded postsecondary credit.

Passing scores are submitted to the institutions of higher education the students plan to attend. No uniform policy exists on how colleges must award AP credits (Maeroff, 1983). However, at most colleges, students who pass AP examinations are awarded college credit in the tested subject matter and excused from introductory courses in those subjects (Oakes & Lipton, 1990, p. 204). In addition to gaining exemption from required courses, in some cases, students gain sophomore standing (Dillon, 1986). At approximately 1,700 colleges and universities nationwide, scores of 3 or higher on at least three AP examinations often qualify a student to skip the freshman year and enter college as a sophomore (Burke, 1989).

The AP program is organized in two parts. The first part consists of outlines of content that should be included in an AP course. These outlines and curricula are developed by a committee of secondary school and college teachers and may be revised annually to meet the changing requirements of students and colleges. Texts and materials used in colleges are also used in the AP courses (Burke, 1989).

The second part of the AP program consists of annual examinations to assess AP students' performance. In 1988, examinations were available in 29 course

offerings in 15 subject areas, which included art, physics, the humanities, and technical and scientific fields (Burke, 1989). The examinations are in the form of multiple choice and essay questions. They are graded according to a national standard by readers who are college and high school teachers (Burke, 1989). Essay evaluations and multiple choice scores are combined and converted to a point scale as follows: a score of 5 means extremely well qualified; a score of 4 means well qualified; a score of 3 means qualified; a score of 2 means possibly qualified; and a score of 1 means no recommendation. Scores of 3 and above are accepted for college credit and advanced placement at participating universities and colleges (Burke, 1989).

Growth of the Advanced Placement Program

When AP was first offered in 1954, 500 students took the examination and 18 colleges granted AP credit to students who performed well on the examination. By 1980, 116,000 students took the AP examination nationwide and 1,800 colleges awarded credit. In the past decade, the number of students who participated in the AP program grew by 175% to more than 330,000 students, and the number of colleges that received AP grades grew to more than 2,500 (Herr, 1992).

In 1988-1989, AP courses were offered in 8,768 secondary schools, compared to 104 schools in 1955-1956. In 1990, the nearly 9,000 schools that participated in the AP program represented nearly 43% of all high schools in the United States (Hershey, 1990).

Many states adopted initiatives to stimulate the growth of the AP program (Herr, 1992). In the 1980s, South Carolina, West Virginia, Florida, Utah, and Alabama set aside funds to pay for costs associated with the AP program. The most recent state to do so was Indiana in 1990 (Herr, 1992).

The national recognition, acceptance, and effect of the AP program on major campuses is partially due to changes in the traditional lockstep method of receiving an education (Marland, 1975). Schools now define multiple paths to a high school diploma, and colleges exercise flexibility in their admission policies to meet the needs of individual students. Advanced Placement is one proven way to individualize instruction at the level of the student's capacity without turning prematurely to the college campus (Marland, 1975). Remaining in high school is beneficial to students who need the social and extracurricular life the high school offers (Daniel & Cox, 1985). Other ways AP benefits high schools, colleges, and students include that AP removes the pressure on high schools to provide well for their best students; options such as internships forge a partnership between school and the community; the AP program crosses the boundary between school and college; the cost of the AP examination is small compared to college tuition; and AP students benefit from the classroom environment where learning is prized and teachers have demanding standards (Daniel & Cox, 1985).

Although little is known about administrative policies for AP and honors programs, the AP program has gained more administrative support as a program for advanced students than the preexisting honors program (Herr, 1992). The Advisory

Committee of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program conducted a study to compare the relative magnitude of the AP and honors programs (Herr, 1992). The results showed that AP courses received preferential treatment for funding and more administrative support than honors courses. Of the 361 schools surveyed, 43% provided funding for inservice training of AP teachers, while only 19% did so for honors teachers. Very few schools provided financial or scheduling incentives for teachers of either program.

Administrators provided other incentives to support the programs they favored, such as lowering the minimum class size required to offer a particular class. These policies were applied by 68% of all schools surveyed to ensure that AP classes would be offered, whereas only 41% did the same for honors classes. More than 38% of all AP classes had 15 or fewer students, compared to 6% of honors science classes (Herr, 1992).

The preferential treatment of AP classes extended to district administrators. Survey results showed 31% of district officials favored the expansion of AP programs, whereas only 22% reported the same for honors classes. Furthermore, 64% of schools actively encouraged the development of new AP classes, whereas only 48% encouraged the development of new honors classes (Herr, 1992). When compared to AP, honors classes more frequently resembled traditional tracking programs because admission was based on intelligence tests and prior performance but AP admission was based more on a meritocratic system where adequately prepared

students who were motivated to accept more challenging work could enroll, which gave teachers and students a greater voice in AP admissions (Herr, 1992).

Finley (1984) reported similar findings on AP admissions. Finley found that student motivation was a factor in assignments to AP English classes. Teachers placed more value on student motivation than on student ability when counseling students on whether or not to take AP courses. Consequently, higher ability students with low motivation were found in lower level classes, and lower ability but highly motivated students were found and encouraged to remain in AP classes.

Although both AP and honors programs are expanding, Herr (1992) concluded that most administrators favor the AP program compared to honors classes.

Advanced Placement courses are more likely to receive special funding, including specific teacher training funds; they are more likely to employ a coordinating staff member; they are more likely to have lower minimum enrollment requirements and more likely to receive an extra grade point for determination of class rank; and AP programs are more likely to receive active encouragement for expansion of their programs from school board personnel.

Despite high administrative support for the AP program, it has not totally overshadowed the traditional honors program. Honors programs add depth and interest to student programs, but do not provide acceleration; credit by examination provides acceleration but does not add depth and maturity; AP courses appear to be the best of the present alternatives, but often do not accelerate the students far enough nor do they coordinate the efforts of the high school and college (White, 1974).

Follow-up studies of students involved in early admissions programs revealed they were academically successful but had more difficulty adjusting to campus life and, although a larger percentage of students went on to graduate school, three times as many transferred to other colleges during their undergraduate careers (White, 1974).

Advanced Placement and College Admission

Little research has been done on the use of AP coursework and the AP examination scores in the college admission process (Hershey, 1990). When the AP program was first implemented, AP examination scores were obtained in May of students' senior year, which was too late to be considered for admission decisions. Now, increasing numbers of sophomores and juniors are taking AP courses, so that examination score results exist for admission decisions.

Hershey (1990) surveyed 63 college admission officers representing colleges in the northeast and Ohio that varied in admission difficulty from selective to most selective. The purpose of the survey was to answer questions about the extent to which AP scores are used in making admission decisions; whether the failure to take AP courses, if they are offered, influences an admission officer's judgment about a student; and the assumptions admission officers make concerning the rigor of non-AP courses (Hershey, 1990).

Although the survey was too narrow to be conclusive, 60% of admission officers expected to see AP scores on transcripts, and 64% used AP examination scores in making college admission decisions. Admission officers at the most

competitive colleges and universities paid particular attention to the scores themselves, while admission officers at the other colleges and universities responded more to the evidence of intellectual curiosity and academic ambition students evidenced by taking AP courses than to the examination scores themselves (Hershey, 1990).

A survey of 40 colleges that accept AP courses showed that colleges also varied in the number of credits they awarded for AP scores and the AP scores they accepted (Wimmers & Morgan, 1990). The credit hours awarded varied from 3 to 12. Some colleges accepted AP scores ranging from 3 to 5, whereas others just accepted scores of 4 and 5.

Dillon (1986) surveyed 50 colleges on the admissions benefits of AP enrollment. The 50 colleges selected for the study were listed by the College Board as among those receiving the most AP scores and included the most competitive colleges in the nation. Dillon (1986) confirmed in his study that AP on a transcript has come to be accepted as proof of rigorous academic preparation, worthy of special weight in admissions decisions. Students who have taken AP classes are considered to have learned scientific inquiry, reasoning, problem solving, and analysis, all of which enhance course quality (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1982).

The college admissions benefits of AP classes extend to private colleges (Talley, 1989). Talley focused on the benefits of weighted grade point averages. Students who take honors and AP courses receive weighted grades for those courses. Grades are weighted by the addition of a specific percentage increment of the base

grade to the final grade. Talley said weighted grades give students an advantage for admission into private, undergraduate, four year colleges because weighted grades increase grade point average and class rank, both of which are important factors in college admission decisions.

Weighted grades can have the negative effect of encouraging rank conscious students to take courses of little interest to them in order to gain rank and to avoid electives that do not carry weighted grades (Herr, 1992). Consequently, less advanced students are enrolled in courses in the arts, shop, and business. However, a study by Herr (1992) showed that 60% of teachers questioned favored weighted grades. The reasons given included that weighted grades create a more accurate class ranking, reward extra work, encourage rank conscious students to take more challenging courses, prevent less able students who receive As in easier courses from placing first in class, foster healthy competition, and help solve the problem of grade inflation.

Students are not penalized in college admissions if they graduate from a school without an AP program. However, one third of institutions surveyed by Hershey (1990) indicated that students who did not take AP courses might be judged as unmotivated and not intellectually advanced. He reported that 20% of college admission officers thought regular courses might not prepare students well enough to succeed in their institution. At a few highly selective colleges, AP courses have become almost a requirement for admission. Colleges and universities also use the AP exam scores as a means of judging the quality of the high school's AP courses,

grading standards, and other courses as well. If many students receive an A in their AP courses, but a 2 on the AP exams, this suggests to the admission officers that the students received inflated grades or a curriculum that did not match the AP exam.

Participation in an AP class does not automatically mean the student takes the AP exam. In a survey of 847 AP science teachers, 24% said students were required by the school department or class regulations to take the AP exam, 57% of teachers recommended all their students take the exam, and 18% recommended that only their better students take it. In this same survey, Herr (1992) reported 70% of students enrolled in AP science classes actually took the exam, and in 10% of the classes, no one took the exam. Furthermore, nearly one third of students in the sample had AP on their transcripts, but never took the AP exam. Students who successfully complete AP courses and examinations are usually highly able, highly motivated, and often recruited by a large number of institutions (LeMay, 1985).

The academic benefits of AP enrollment extend beyond college admission. Advanced Placement students have an academic advantage over non-AP high school students and college students enrolled in comparable courses. Harris and Galitsis (1980) compared the achievement of college students in first-year chemistry classes with AP students in the comparable chemistry class and first-year chemistry students in secondary schools.

The AP students' scores were superior to the two other groups of students on eight of the nine areas tested. Harris and Galitsis (1980) concluded secondary teachers should encourage bright students to take AP classes because comparable

scores between high school students and a college students demonstrates greater skill on the part of AP students.

Another study that compared the performance of high school AP students and college students for comparable coursework was conducted using the AP French exam (Wimmers & Morgan, 1990). Each year, 8,000 high school students take the AP examination in French Language. The exam measures proficiency in listening, reading, writing, and speaking at the third-year college level. This study was conducted to determine how closely AP grades of 3, 4, and 5 corresponded to college students' grades of C, B, and A and to determine how language proficiency for AP candidates compared with language proficiency of college students who spent six college semesters studying French.

Advanced Placement students scored slightly higher than third-year college students in all four parts of the examination. Advanced Placement students with final grades of 5 outperformed college students with final course grades of A by an average of 21 points on each of the four parts of the test. Advanced Placement candidates with grades of 4 also outperformed the college students in all four parts of the exam. The group with grades of 3, the lowest grade for which college credit is given, also outperformed college students who earned final course grades of C and B. Advanced Placement students who received grades of 2 averaged slightly higher scores than college students with grades of C on three of the four sections of the AP exam (Wimmers & Morgan, 1990).

AP students often shared similarities in their academic and socioeconomic backgrounds. According to a 1986 College Board Report by Willingham and Morris, AP students tended to share the following characteristics when compared to non-AP students: they came from more advantaged homes; they came from secondary schools that placed special emphasis on college preparation; as college applicants, they were more likely to come to the college campus for interviews; they were more likely to express intellectual leanings with respect to education and career goals; they were twice as likely as non-AP students to have scored more than 600 on the subject areas tested on the SAT; and they were twice as likely to have won academic honors in high school (p. 27).

Once in college, AP students were also more likely than non-AP students to specialize in majors that had tough grading standards; they were more likely to have double majors; and they had a lower college drop-out rate than non-AP students (15% vs. 26%). They were more likely to maintain a B average in their freshman year (40% vs. 33%) and exceeded the matched non-AP group in both college honors and departmental honors. Although very few AP students (3%) graduated ahead of schedule, by June of their senior year of college, almost twice as many AP students compared to non-AP students (17% vs. 9%) were admitted to doctoral level programs (Willingham & Morris, 1986, p. 27-28).

However, the shared advantages of AP students and benefits derived from participation in AP programs often fail to apply to African-American students. By the year 2000, less than 48% of African-American and Hispanic high school students will

attend institutions of higher learning compared to nearly 64% of their white classmates (College Entrance Examination Board, 1993, p. 3). Also, African-American AP students have not achieved as high a passing rate on the AP exams as other groups of AP students. In 1988, 13,844 African Americans took AP examinations, and only 5,447 qualified for AP credit, a success rate of only 39%. By comparison, the success rate of white students for the same year was 64%. In 1988 in Florida, 1,580 African-American students took the AP exam, and 446 passed, a success rate of 28%. When various ethnic groups were compared, African Americans were the least successful of all minority groups on all the AP tests (Institute for Independent Education, 1989).

To understand the disparity in achievement, educators must address the issues of minority students' expectations of higher education and of how well they are academically prepared (College Entrance Examination Board, 1993, p. 3). Frequently, students in urban areas are constrained by language barriers, low academic expectations, and socioeconomic obstacles that make it difficult to engage in quality education. Large numbers of minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged students are not prepared academically and, therefore, have fewer opportunities to enter college (College Entrance Examination Board, 1993, p. 3). For these students, AP is often not an option at their schools.

However, success rates on the AP exams were higher for African-American students in private schools than in public schools. Of the 13,844 African Americans who took AP exams in 1988, 2,114 of those students were in private schools. Their

success rate was 61% or 1,297 students passed. By comparison, of the 11,730 African Americans who took AP courses in public schools, 4,150 or 35%, passed the examinations (Institute for Independent Education, 1989).

Although African Americans scored higher in private schools than in public schools, their success rate still lagged behind that of other minority groups. When AP examination success rates of minority students in public and private schools were compared, most ethnic groups had a 4 to 10 point spread. African-American students had a 26 point spread.

However, the College Board Review (Vital Statistics, 1991) reported a significant increase in the proportion of minority test takers in all five of the College Board's major testing programs, with the exception of American Indians. The percentage of minority test takers of AP examinations rose from 16.1% in 1987 to 25.7% in 1991. The College Board Report (Vital Statistics, 1991) said participation in College Board tests often leads to college attendance, so the increase in minority participation in the testing program indicates a possible increase in minority college attendance for the 1990s. This has positive implications for African-American students whose college attendance rates have declined from 26.3% in 1976 to 25.1% in 1980 to 21.2% in 1986 (Solorzano, 1992).

African Americans and College Admission and Attendance

Currently, African-American high school students are not academically competitive with other ethnic groups for college admission as evidenced by their

standardized test scores. The African-American high school drop-out rate is 30% nationwide and reaches 50% and higher in the inner cities (Wharton, 1986). The college attendance rate for this population is in decline and the college drop-out rate is high (Solorzano, 1992).

The proportion of total bachelor's degrees conferred on African Americans fell from 6.6% in 1978 to 6.5% in 1980 to 5.9% in 1984 (Solorzano, 1992). Higher college completion rates for African-American students primarily have been in historically African-American institutions (Wilson-Sadberry, Winfield, & Royster, 1991). In 1988, 11.3% of African-American females and 11.2% of males attained at least four years of college. In contrast, 17.3% of white females and 24.9% of white males attained at least four years of college (Solorzano, 1992). Only the highest income families in the African-American population experienced any improvement in college attendance in the 1980s, and this group lost ground relative to white students (Hauser & Anderson, 1991).

In Florida, the legislature mandated a comprehensive standardized achievement testing program for preparation and entrance into the State University System (SUS). The testing program includes the Student Statewide Assessment Test (SSAT) I and II, which is required for high school graduation. African-American students' scores on the SSAT I continue to be below those of all other ethnic groups. In 1985, their composite score was 70, compared to the composite score of 92 for white students (Florida State Board of Education, 1987).

The SSAT II is administered to eleventh and twelfth-graders. In 1985, 74% of African-American students passed the communications section on the first attempt, compared to 93% of white students. In addition, admission to the SUS of Florida requires minimum scores on the ACT and SAT. In 1985-1986, the SUS required a minimum of 19 on the ACT and 900 on the SAT. However, in 1985, the average score for African-American students was 17 on the ACT and 820 on the SAT (Florida State Board of Education, 1987).

African-American scores continue below the national average. In 1991 African-Americans averaged 385 points on the verbal section and 351 points on the math section of the SAT, 160 points below the combined national average of 896. In the county used in this study, 450 students, or 25% of students taking the SAT in 1991, were African American, and they scored an average of 361 points on the verbal section of the SAT and 392 points on the math section ("National SAT Marks," 1991).

In Florida, college students must pass the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) before admission to junior standing. Failure on the CLAST excludes students from college graduation. The CLAST was first administered in October, 1983. African-American students scored lower in every category than white students (Florida State Board of Education, 1987).

Once in college, the percentage of African Americans who complete college remains low (Summers, 1990). Far more African Americans attend college than actually graduate, and fewer students from low socioeconomic backgrounds attend any

postsecondary institutions (Wilson-Sadberry et al., 1991). The college drop-out rate has left representation of African Americans in higher education below their 12% representation in the general population (Wharton, 1986). Against this background, AP gains significance as a means of preparing capable African-American students for academic success in both high school and college.

Financial factors may play a significant role in determining college attendance rates of African-American students. These factors include the financial status of the family, financial preparation for college, attitudes about the returns of college investments, the degree to which colleges and universities recruit youngsters from racial and ethnic groups, and the degree to which financial aid is available in the form of work study, grants, and scholarships (Wilson-Sadberry et al., 1991).

Hauser and Anderson (1991) studied trends that might explain the decline in African-American college attendance from 1976-1986. The researchers said the most plausible explanation for the decline in African-American entry into college was the shift from direct grants toward loans to finance college attendance. From 1975 to 1986 financial aid in the form of grants declined from 80% to 46% and available financial aid in the form of loans increased from 17% to 50%. However, at equal levels of family income, African-American families are more vulnerable to unemployment, have accumulated fewer economic assets, and are less able than white families of equal income to absorb the cost of a loan (Hauser & Anderson, 1991). College costs are outstripping both inflation and family income, and as the loan default rate approaches \$2 billion, student financial aid continues to draw political fire

(Hansen, 1989). Due to the unwillingness to accept loans and the unavailability of grants, many African-American students are unable to finance college educations.

African Americans and women are likely to receive less federal aid than white men. Women are further financially handicapped because they cannot calculate child care costs when computing college expenses (McLaren, 1988). Therefore, lack of financial support may be a key variable in explaining observed changes in college entry for African-American students (Hauser & Anderson, 1991).

Community colleges have been the most accessible means of higher education for African Americans since 1970. Community colleges maintain an open-door policy for admissions and use standardized tests for advisement and placement, not for denial of access (Summers, 1990). Nonetheless, African-American enrollment in community colleges is decreasing. In Florida, first-time African-American student enrollment averaged about 10% less than first-time white student enrollment between 1977 and 1984 (Florida State Board of Education, 1987).

The educational preparation of many African-American students to succeed in postsecondary education is questionable. Public schools across America graduate high percentages of African-American students "whose cumulative deficiencies in reading, writing, and computational skills classify them as functional illiterates" (Bates & Wilson, 1987). Findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress indicated that fewer African-American than white eleventh-grade students read at the level expected of college freshmen, and 19% of African-American eleventh-graders

read at the adept proficiency level compared with 47% of white students (Wilson-Sadberry et al., 1991).

A case study by Weis (1983) on community college attendance by African-American students in a northeastern urban community college revealed a drop-out rate of 89% for the fall class of 1977 (p. 250). Students consistently registered for classes, obtained grant money, and then received "withdraw" or "fail" grades for excessive absences. The same students registered for the same courses the following semester (Weis, 1983, p. 259). Faculty and administrative jobs in the state system depended upon student enrollment, so the community college, while it made an effort to stop the pattern of student enrollment in the same classes in subsequent semesters, did not deny admission to students who engaged in this practice (Weis, 1983, p. 259). In this case study, an average of 30% of students acquired "withdraw" grades in college courses, and almost half the students did not complete any given course (Weis, 1983, pp. 248-249).

Advanced Academic Programs in Florida

In 1972, the Florida Legislature enacted laws designed to facilitate the use of AP and other acceleration mechanisms and to provide incentives to secondary and postsecondary institutions to encourage students to participate in these programs. The legislature has amended or enhanced legislation to provide further incentives or to remove obstacles to participation in acceleration programs (Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1988). According to state law, each public university

baccalaureate degree program must be designed to allow students the opportunity to complete a minimum of 25% of their degree requirements through acceleration mechanism (Abraham, 1978-1979).

In addition to AP, Florida offers five other curriculum acceleration options for advanced students in the secondary schools. These options include Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate Instruction, Early Admission, the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the Proficiency Examination Program (Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1988).

Of the six accelerated curricular options, AP has the highest participation rate in Florida. The number of participants doubled between 1980-1981 and 1985-1986. According to the Postsecondary Planning Commission Report (1988), the State of Florida is committed to acceleration options because they enrich and broaden the curriculum and shorten the time needed to receive a postsecondary degree.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) reported that Florida, South Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland were included in the top 10 states nationally that had the highest numbers of AP exams per 100 graduating public high school seniors in 1987-1988 (Burke, 1989). In 1984, Florida had 7,410 AP candidates. That number increased to 17,043 in 1988, a 130% increase. Also, in 1984 there were a total of 9,685 AP examinations administered in Florida. In 1988, there were a total of 25,111 AP examinations administered in Florida, an increase of 159%. The number of Florida schools, both private and public, participating in the AP program has increased from 233 in 1984 to 299 in 1988, a 28% increase (Burke, 1989).

Florida was the first state in the SREB region, and one of the first in the nation, to pass legislation (in 1984) to provide financial support for school systems that participated in the AP program. School systems with students who score 3 or above on the AP exam receive extra funds for inservice training for AP teachers and classroom materials. There is a \$57 fee for the AP exam, which many school districts pay (Burke, 1989).

Summary

Advanced Placement as a curricular option for academically superior students has gained wide acceptance by high schools, colleges, and universities. Its acceptance is so widespread, that college admission officers, especially at highly selective colleges and universities, expect to see AP courses and AP examination grades on students' transcripts.

Advanced Placement has been shown in research studies to prepare students for college level work to the extent that AP students outperform college students in subject matter examinations. As the AP program continues to prove itself by students' academic successes, administrators at the school and district level have begun to give the program preferential treatment over other programs through the allocation of funding, teacher training, and smaller class sizes. The AP program's success is also attributable to its flexibility as it grows and expands through the offering of additional AP courses to meet the changing needs of students.

However, African-American students are not fully represented in the AP population. Due to their high failure rate on the AP examination, they do not receive the college admissions edge of AP credits on their high school transcripts. They are underrepresented in the college population and when they do attend college, only a small percentage graduate.

The Florida Legislature has shown its commitment to academic acceleration programs by being one of the first states to pass legislation to provide funds for AP programs and one of the few states to delineate how institutions may claim funding for students. The State of Florida also has removed obstacles to student participation by requiring state colleges and universities to allow students to complete up to 25% of their degree requirements through acceleration options. The rapid and extensive growth of the AP program clearly indicates Florida is a national leader in support of the AP program and other academic acceleration programs.

The full implications of the AP program are still unknown due to gaps in research. Little research has been conducted on administrative policies regarding the AP program, the use of AP coursework in college admissions, or African-American participation in AP programs.

Minority Participation in Advanced Placement

Status of Minority Participation in Advanced Placement

The number of African-American students who participated in AP rose during the five-year period of 1984-1989 (Vital Statistics, 1991). In 1984, 5,200

African-American students nationwide participated in AP. In 1989, participation rose to 11,792, more than double the 1989 figure.

Overall, 61,354 minority students participated in AP in 1989, compared to 21,501 AP minority students in 1984. In 1989, Asian Americans accounted for 32,230 of the AP participants (compared to 11,413 in 1984). Hispanics accounted for 16,357 of the AP participants (compared to 5,200 in 1984); and American Indians and Alaskan Native Indians accounted for 975 of the AP participants (compared to 440 in 1984) (Vital Statistics, 1991).

In SREB states, 21,262 of all AP examinations in 1988 were taken by minority students in public schools. Scores for minority participants increased 34% over 1987 scores, and minorities earned high enough scores on 53,000 exams to qualify for college credit and/or placement in classes above the entering freshman level, such as honors or sophomore courses (Burke, 1989).

In SREB states, in 1984, 5,764 minorities earned score of 3 or better on the AP exam. That number more than doubled in 1988 to 11,851. Nearly three fourths of minorities tested in 1984 and 1988 received scores of 3 or higher (Burke, 1989).

Although more minority students are taking AP exams, AP programs are more likely to be absent in schools with the highest minority enrollments. According to data compiled by the Public School Survey from the National Center for Educational Statistics, 9% of secondary schools that had the highest minority enrollments had no AP programs while only 5% of schools with low minority enrollments had no AP

programs. Schools with the highest proportion of minorities (75% or larger) reported no AP programs (Ancarrow, 1990).

Advanced Placement programs in private schools are similarly affected by minority enrollment. The 1985-1986 National Survey of Private Schools obtained responses from 5,295 teachers and 1,175 administrators in 1,387 private schools. Approximately 63% of private schools with minority enrollments of 15% to 49% offered AP programs compared to 17% of schools with minority enrollments of 50% or more (Hammer, 1990). When compared to public schools, private schools did not differ in terms of the percentage offering AP programs or the average number of AP subject matter areas covered. Approximately 41% of private schools offered AP courses (Hammer, 1990).

Despite fewer AP programs in schools with high minority enrollments, college application rates did not vary significantly across school district sizes or across regions. The largest schools with the largest minority enrollments had college application rates of 51% compared with 56% for large schools with low minority enrollments. Other findings from the Public School Survey included that schools with higher enrollments had a greater percentage of minorities than small schools; the West and South had the highest level of minority enrollment; and elementary schools had a higher percentage of minority students than did secondary schools (Ancarrow, 1990).

In 1986, minorities, with the exception of Asians, were underrepresented in gifted and talented programs in the public schools, and overrepresented in groups which received punishment and assignments to special education classes. White

students composed 70% of the school population, and represented 81% of students in gifted and talented programs and 78% of the nations high school graduates.

African-American students composed 16% of the high school student population, yet accounted for 30% of suspensions, 31% of recipients of corporal punishment, 35% of assignments to classes for educable mentally retarded, 27% of assignments to classes for trainable mentally retarded, 16% of assignments to classes for the speech impaired, 27% of assignments to classes for seriously emotionally disturbed, and 17% of assignments to classes for specific learning disabilities. African Americans represented only 8% of assignments to classes for gifted and talented students and 13% of high school graduates. By means of comparison, Asian Americans represented 3% of the high school population and 6% of assignments to classes for gifted and talented, and 3% percent of graduates (Ancarrow, 1990).

Between 1984-1985 in Florida, African-American students composed 23.61% of the school population, but only .5% of the gifted program. They were also suspended from school in numbers disproportionate to their representation in the population. In this same year in Florida, African Americans accounted for 37% of suspensions, 31% of in-school suspensions, and 36.35% of incidents of corporal punishment. White students received 57% of the suspensions for the same time period, 59% of in-school suspensions, and 60.43% of corporal punishments. White students composed 65.9% of the population (Florida State Board of Education, 1987).

African-American students' access to and underrepresentation in AP programs continues to be an unresolved problem. In Florida, standards for promotion in high

schools are incorporated into law through the pupil progression plan. Between 1975-1984, African-American high school enrollment increased 20% but the number of students retained increased by 44%. The largest number of pupil retention was in the ninth grade, followed by the tenth grade (Florida State Board of Education, 1987).

Factors that Affect Minority Participation in Advanced Placement Programs

Harris and Ford (1991) stated the identification process for gifted minorities fails to reflect research or to develop a universally accepted definition of "gifted" and fails to acknowledge the culture and context within which African-American students function. They reported that an examination of the relevant literature since 1924 revealed that of approximately 4,000 articles on the gifted, only 63 articles, or 2%, addressed minority group members. This number was lower still if only articles on gifted African-American students were counted.

Research on gifted minority students in the United States has focused on the three main issues of nontraditional methods of identification; programming that emphasized the particular strengths of minority students (such as creativity and leadership); and specialized guidance to help students overcome barriers and conflicts related to their ethnic identity (Kerr, Colangelo, Maxay, & Christensen, 1992). Nontraditional methods of identification of gifted minorities, such as culture free testing, have received attention because traditional methods identify only small numbers of minorities. The United States Civil Rights Commission reported that African Americans are underrepresented by 30% to 50% in gifted programs, and

overrepresented by 40% to 50% in special education programs (Ford & Harris, 1992). African Americans and Mexican Americans are the most economically disadvantaged minorities and the most underrepresented among top scorers in traditional intelligence tests (Kerr et al., 1992).

Specialized programs are reported in the research although few exist. Specialized guidance is more prevalent because counselors must help high achieving minorities overcome conflicts between ethnic identity and being gifted, as well as develop a distinct ethnic identity while fostering academic and socioemotional development (Kerr et al., 1992).

Harris and Ford (1991) examined barriers to the effective recognition and assistance of gifted African Americans. One barrier is the use of intelligence tests to identify giftedness because these tests were designed to measure the performance of persons from the dominant culture. Another barrier is the bias of educators who believe giftedness cannot be found in culturally different populations.

An example of this bias is in the segregation of students into different class assignments. As school districts continue efforts to comply with legal desegregation guidelines, problems arise which affect the AP program. In one report from the Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky, schools were brought in compliance with the student enrollment guidelines only by including all minorities under the racial category "black," and AP programs remained segregated (George, 1988). In one high school's AP program for tenth through twelfth grades, only one student was African American compared to 323 African-American students in its regular program. Only

one of seven high schools had an AP enrollment which was racially balanced according to enrollment guidelines (George, 1988). The segregation of minorities is a current concern for the AP program. "The needs of these students at the level of gifted and talented are seldom addressed." (Hartley, 1987, p. 173)

State and local education agencies have wide leverage in interpreting the definitions for "gifted and talented" (Hartley, 1987). How states and local agencies interpret these definitions affects the services gifted and talented minority students receive.

The currently accepted methods of identifying gifted African-American students through intelligence tests, teacher nomination, and cutoff scores precludes the identification of the gifts and talents of minority students (Frasier, 1991). The identification process is affected by teacher expectations, whether English is the student's native language, the child's degree of acculturation, and whether the student is in a school atmosphere that encourages different learning styles (Hartley, 1987).

The problem of identifying gifted and talented minority students is exacerbated by the experiential deprivation, limited language development, and socioeconomic and racial isolation experienced by minority children (Frasier, 1991). These factors foster the attitude that gifted children cannot be found among the disadvantaged population. Children of lower social class backgrounds are overrepresented in the lower level academic classes, while children of middle class, professional families are overrepresented in AP or gifted classes (Finley, 1984).

Class assignment is significant because it affects the education children receive. Finley (1984) studied class assignments to high school English classes. He found that curricula and teaching methods differed in the different levels. Teachers of gifted and advanced classes focused on the traditional college preparatory curriculum. Advanced students studied classical literature, literary analysis, and expository writing. The lower level students studied survival skills, such as filling out job applications. Middle level students studied concepts from the traditional curriculum without its literary content.

Examples of Advanced Placement Programs that Focus on Minority Participation

Despite minority underrepresentation in the AP program, AP courses are introduced into an increasingly broad range of secondary schools so that academically able and highly motivated students from every socioeconomic background and region are more likely to have access to these courses (Raices & Braestrup, 1991). An example of a program that demonstrates that poor, disadvantaged high schools students can learn to excel in demanding courses of study is Ventures in Education at Tuba High School in a Navaho reservation in Tucson, Arizona.

Approximately 4,000 students were enrolled in an honors level curriculum which included four years of English, math, science, and social studies, and at least two years of a foreign language. In 1990, 66% of the students enrolled were economically disadvantaged African Americans, Hispanics, or Native Americans; 31% were disadvantaged whites; 33% spoke English as a second language; and 50%

were members of families headed by a single mother. However, 29 students were enrolled in Tuba's AP program and more than 90% of the 1990 graduates enrolled in 4 year colleges. Two Tuba High School valedictorians attended the Michigan Institute of Technology and three graduates studied at Oxford. Factors that contributed to the strength and success of Ventures in Education were AP courses, summer workshops, enriched curriculum, a longer school day, and a commitment to continued counseling and guidance for every student in the program (Raices & Braestrup, 1991).

Ventures in Education started in 1980 with a grant from the Macy Foundation. Two school sites were chosen in New York City and five rural schools were chosen in Alabama. After four years, the programs were so successful that the Macy foundation decided to continue funding for another four years. Another school in New York City, 29 more schools in Alabama, 1 in Connecticut, and Tuba High School in Arizona were all added to Ventures in Education (Raices & Braestrup, 1991). A cost-benefit report on the 1989-1990 school year demonstrated that relatively small additional investments in students over and above all government support for education yielded high rewards for student achievement (Raices & Braestrup, 1991)

Another program designed to develop the academic abilities of minorities was the Project to Improve Minority Education (PRIME). This program served approximately 10,000 students between seventh and twelfth grades in the Phoenix, Arizona area, including nearby mining towns. The goals of the program were to

increase high school graduation rates, college admissions, the number of students who pass high school algebra, and the number of students who pass AP exams (Keller, 1990).

The designers of PRIME analyzed hundreds of secondary school projects and incorporated the successful programs into PRIME. The project brought parents, administrators, counselors, and the community into partnership with the teachers. This partnership was identified as the critical factor which made the program succeed. Academic involvement with students began in seventh grade and culminated with college-level instruction in the eleventh and twelfth grades. Arizona State University and the Arizona Advanced Placement Council worked with PRIME to conduct AP teacher training as a regular part of its activities (Keller, 1990).

In another program, between 1981-1984 the College Board sponsored a 3 year, \$1 million project, Options for Excellence, for high schools in San Antonio, Texas. The two major goals of the project were to improve the quality of education for all students in greater San Antonio and to facilitate the movement of students, particularly minority students, out of high school and into colleges and universities (Jones, 1985, p. 7).

When Options for Excellence was initiated, 19 of the 49 schools in the greater San Antonio area had a minority population of over 50% and 9 schools had a minority population of over 90%, primarily Mexican American (Jones, 1985, p. 7). The designers of Options for Excellence identified the PSAT and the AP program as its principal methods to accomplish its two stated goals (Jones, 1985, p. 9).

To meet the first goal of improving the quality of education for all high school students in the San Antonio area, pre-test activities for the PSAT were instituted in the schools. Letters to parents in both English and Spanish were sent to approximately 15,000 households within the 3 years of the project's duration. These letters described the PSAT and the benefits of taking it. Approximately 75% of the public schools' eleventh-graders took the test, which resulted in the participation of a significant number of high school students in college-going activities (Jones, 1985, p. 16).

Post-test activities included sending participating schools copies of students' answers and correct answers along with test booklets so students could review the original test questions. By the end of the 3 year period, 75% of schools reported using classroom time to prepare students for the PSAT and 95% used class time to introduce students to the purpose and benefits of the PSAT (Jones, 1985, p. 27).

When Options for Excellence was initiated, only one high school in the greater San Antonio area had clearly identifiable AP courses (Jones, 1985, p. 17). To meet the second goal of facilitating the transition of students, in particular minority students, from high school to college, the project forged school and college connections, sponsored conferences and workshops to produce changes in the schools, employed a strategy to recruit potential AP teachers, and outlined a process by which schools could identify students capable of succeeding in AP courses. It also suggested a method for schools to develop and deliver new curricula and establish criteria for the evaluation of achievement and performance (Jones, 1985, p. 3).

The Options for Excellence staff also recognized that many academically prepared students had difficulty surviving in college. Consequently, workshops were offered to students which addressed issues such as anxiety management, the nature of the college environment, depression, self-assessment, assertiveness, and study skills (Jones, 1985, p. 21).

Formal recognition, a series of workshops, and summer AP institutes were utilized in the project to provide continuing professional development for AP teachers (Jones, 1985, p. 11). Contacts with school and community groups, the media, and parents were also used to foster communication and cooperation. An advisory panel representative of the community was selected. Panel members were chosen to provide advice and counsel to the project's staff because panel members had expertise in higher education, secondary schools, and the business sector (Jones, 1985, p. 13).

Although only 1 school had identifiable AP courses at the initiation of Options for Excellence, during the second year of the project, 21 schools offered 1 or more AP courses, and by the third year, an additional 12 schools had implemented AP courses (Jones, 1985, p. 17). The school district paid for students' AP test fees and raised money to send AP teachers to summer institutes. Finally, 40% of AP teachers who received stipends were Hispanic, which not only created diversity among the ranks of master teachers, but reflected the racial, social, and cultural variety of the San Antonio school district (Jones, 1985, p. 36).

Other schools across the country have created programs to identify and educate talented minority youth. The College Board issued a report which identified methods

used by different schools to integrate marginal students into the AP program. Rhineas Banning High School in California guaranteed AP enrollment to any student who was willing to sign a contract and commit to the requirements of the AP course. AP teachers at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles voluntarily met with AP students on Saturdays, vacations, before and after school, and whenever necessary to provide students with extra assistance. Also, once a year the school held a rally to introduce AP students and their teachers to the student body. At Whitney Young Magnet High School in Chicago, AP students were required to adopt newly enrolled AP students and answer all their questions about the AP program. At El Cerrito High School in El Cerrito, California, students in one of the English AP classes shared control of the curriculum with the teacher and chose what they want to read for the course (College Entrance Examination Board, 1993, pp. 7-10).

Summary

Although the AP program currently enrolls an underrepresentation of minority students (with the exception of Asians), innovative programs are being implemented around the country to identify and maximize the academic potential of academically able minority students. These programs, though few, have consistently met with success.

Minority participation in AP programs is affected by the size and minority enrollment of a school. Larger schools with higher student-teacher ratios tend to have more AP classes. The lowest number of AP classes are in schools with high minority

enrollments. Minority participation in AP is also affected by the identification process which relies heavily on grades, student motivation, teacher nomination, and standardized test scores. These traditional methods often fail to identify capable minority students.

High Achieving African-American High School Students

Effects of Familial Factors on Academic Achievement

The family's influence upon African-American children's academic achievement seems largely independent of family structure. What appears most important to students' academic achievement in African-American communities is the quality of interaction among family members and children (Slaughter-Defoe, 1991). African-American families successful in motivating teenage members toward school achievement tend to have strong parental values and expectations, engage in academically related activities, and demonstrate optimism and a sense of control (Johnson, 1992).

These conclusions were supported in a study by Prom-Jackson (1987). Prom-Jackson studied the family backgrounds of 600 African-American high school students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who had been identified as academically talented in elementary school. The researcher examined the respondents' parents' educational and professional attainment, family sizes and configurations, and the respondents' perceptions of their parents' values.

The majority of parents had working class backgrounds. A majority of fathers were laborers, factory unskilled workers, skilled and unskilled technicians, and postal and administrative workers. The majority of mothers were housewives, nurses, medical therapists, teachers, and personal service workers. The respondents' fathers had an average of 10.2 years of education and the mothers had an average of 11.7 years of education.

Prom-Jackson (1987) found that for low-income academically talented youth, parental educational level was not an effective predictor of grade point average. Prom-Jackson (1987) also found family size did not negatively affect the educational success of academically talented youth. The median number of children in the subjects' families was 3.9, which was larger than the United States average range of 1.9 to 3.0 over the past 10 years. Forty-three percent of respondents came from large families, which suggests family size is not a reliable predictor of grade point average among low income talented youth.

The best predictor of grade point average was self-perceived academic ability, followed in importance by task orientation, person orientation, and mother's value placed on education with no significant differences found between single-parent and two-parent households. Respondents expressed agreement with positive statements made about their parents' beliefs and values about education and careers: both parents placed high value on education, the pursuit of high status careers, developing according to one's inclinations and abilities without stereotyping, and self-value as a male or female. In self-value, mothers were reported as more supportive than fathers

and children from single-mother households received more encouragement to develop according to their inclinations and abilities than children from two-parent households. There were no significant differences between respondents from single-parent households and two-parent households in measures of self-concept or locus of control: respondents from both types of households had positive self-concepts and were inwardly oriented.

Some of these findings conflict with findings from a study by Mulkey, Crain, and Harington (1992). Mulkey et al. (1992) analyzed the separate effect of father and mother absence on the grades and standardized test scores of high school students. They found single-parent upbringing had a significant negative effect on African-American students' high school completion rates. Living in a mother-only family decreased the likelihood of high school completion by about 5% for white children and 13% for African-American children.

Furthermore, the effects of mother or father absence on students' grades were explained more by students' misbehavior than by their families' economic conditions. Students' misbehavior and academic nonperformance were more a function of family social class, specifically educational and socialization resources, than economic status. On this point, the findings of Mulkey et al. (1992) coincide with the findings of Prom-Jackson (1987) who attributed academic success to parental values which fostered academic achievement in children.

A study by the College Board examined data collected from AP students attending schools with large minority enrollments and successful AP examination

scores. At the end of the study, 509 questionnaires were available from successful AP students at 8 schools nationwide. The questionnaire gathered data on minority AP students' family and socioeconomic characteristics. Sixty-three percent of respondents were female and 68% were minority students. Of these students, 50% said they were an only child or the eldest child, while the average number of siblings was 2 (Coley & Casserly, 1992, p. 8). These findings on family size of academically talented youth differed from Prom-Jackson's (1987) study which stated the median number of children in households of academically talented minority youths was 3.9.

Nearly 75% of academically talented minority youth who participated in the College Board study had attended accelerated classes or special curricular programs for academically able or gifted children in elementary school, middle school, or junior high school. Forty percent of mothers and 54% of father were college graduates or studied beyond college while 16% of mothers and 13% of fathers did not graduate from high school. Among standard students, only 4% of parents of high school seniors had less than a high school diploma, while the percentage of parents who graduated from college were similar to those of AP students (Coley & Casserly, 1992, pp. 8-9). Again, these findings differed from Prom-Jackson's study (1987) in which father's of academically talented youth were found to have an average of 10.2 years of education and mothers were found to have an average of 11.7 years of education. However, Prom-Jackson's study differed from the College Board's study in that the College Board identified AP students who had successfully passed the AP exam, while Prom-Jackson's study identified high school students who had been

labeled academically talented in elementary school, but did not specify if they were currently in AP classes.

The results of the College Board study also indicated that parents' occupations covered a broad area. The most common occupations among mothers were clerical, 21%; homemaker, 15%; professional, 13%; teacher, 10%; manager or administrator, 9%; and service, 8%. The most common occupations among fathers were professional, 25%; manager or administrator, 16%; craftsperson, 12%; and proprietor or owner, 11% (Coley & Casserly, 1992, p. 10).

Wilson-Sadberry et al. (1991) and Lee et al. (1991) studied the characteristics of high achieving African Americans by contrasting high and low achieving African Americans. The researchers examined the multiple influences of students' aspirations, families, peers, educational preparation and school counselors on postsecondary attainment among African-American youth.

Data for the study by Wilson-Sadberry et al. (1991) came from the High School and Beyond senior surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center for the National Center for Educational Statistics. Data were collected on high school seniors surveyed in the spring of 1980, 1982, and 1984. The study focused on African-American men who completed public high school and received postsecondary training compared to their counterparts who either did not complete high school or did not receive further education after high school.

The researchers found only slight differences between the two groups in fathers' influences on postsecondary education. Slightly under 50% of men in both

groups reported their fathers did not live with them. However, the majority of males in both groups (86.3% and 92.7% respectively) indicated their mothers had a strong influence on their postsecondary plans.

Teachers had a greater effect on high achievers than counselors. One third of the men who attended on to college said counselors had no influence on their college plans. A slightly higher percentage who did not attend college stated a similar opinion. Counselors had great influence on the plans of 22% of high achieving African-American males compared to 13% who did not complete their education. Teachers had great influence on 75% of men who continued their education, compared to 64% of men who did not continue their education (Wilson-Sadberry et al., 1991). These findings were similar to the results of a study by the College Board, in which 75% of 343 AP students identified a teacher as having had a positive effect on their development (Coley & Casserly, 1992, p. 13).

A high percentage of the men who completed high school were older than would generally be expected after four years of high school. This suggested grade failure and retentions reduced their educational options and were possible factors for their lower academic attainment. Approximately one third of the men in the study had children, which required them to defer schooling in order to maintain employment (Wilson-Sadberry et al., 1991).

The unemployment rate had some association with the degree to which further education was pursued. One third of the men who continued their education came from cities with medium rates of unemployment and 42% of males who did not

continue their education came from cities with high unemployment rates. Almost 25% of students with a high school education or less enlisted in the armed services compared with 14% in the higher educational attainment group.

Lee et al. (1991) derived their data on the characteristics of low and high achieving African Americans from the National Assessment for Educational Progress 1993-1984 reading assessment. An eighth-grade sample was chosen to reduce the influence of differential high school learning experiences, such as tracking; to avoid the bias of dropping out of school prior to the end of high school; and available research on the middle grades was limited.

Background, school, and academic behavioral differences were found between the high and low achieving groups (Lee et al., 1991). High achieving African-American students came from families who were of a considerable higher social class than the families of low achieving African Americans. High achieving students were younger than low achieving students by about half a year. The low achieving students exhibited greater variability in age and contained a substantial number of over-age students. High achieving students also had a higher proportion of working mothers (75% compared to 70%) and were less likely to come from rural areas. However, almost half of high achieving (45%) and low achieving (46%) students came from urban areas.

There were few differences between the schools the two groups attended. The average socioeconomic level of schools the high achieving students attended was higher than the schools attended by lower achieving students. The schools with

higher socioeconomic environment provided a more enriched curriculum and had less students (18%) in remedial reading classes than schools in lower socioeconomic environments (23%). Also, high achieving African-American students were twice as likely (10% versus 5%) to attend Catholic schools. This was related to residential location, with students from rural or urban areas more likely to attend Catholic schools than students from suburban locations. African-American students in Catholic schools were more likely to experience a school environment with an enriched curriculum, fewer disciplinary problems, higher social class student body, more faculty from ethnic or minority groups, fewer students in remedial reading, and were likely to earn higher grades than their counterparts in public schools (Lee et al., 1991).

However, there were more similarities than differences in the schools both groups of students attended. All the schools in the study had high percentages of minority students (48% in the schools high achieving students attended and 53% in the schools low achieving students attended) and high percentages of minority faculty (33% and 40% respectively) (Lee et al., 1991).

Both low and high achieving groups reported watching four hours of television per day. However, the high achieving group, especially females, made better use of time. The high achieving group reported reading more pages in school and for homework, and doing more homework. Lee et al. (1991) concluded the demographic factors of social class, gender (female) and age (younger students earned higher grades) were associated with high grades. Also, the school factors of attending a

higher socioeconomic status school in a suburban location with an enriched curriculum and with fewer faculty from racial or ethnic groups, were all associated with higher academic achievement. In addition, the individual actions of students, such as use of time and commitment to education, contributed to high academic achievement.

Effects of Socioeconomic Factors on Academic Achievement

Socioeconomic factors which affected the educational attainment of 210 young African-American adults were studied by Wilson and Allen (1987). Education beyond high school was pursued by 54% of the 210 African-American men sampled for the study. The overall range of school completed was from 8 to 17 years. The mean was 13 years, or 1 year past high school, and 10% of the sample did not complete high school.

While in high school, 25% of the respondents enrolled in college preparatory courses and 64% expressed a strong sense of personal efficacy that they could conduct their lives as they chose. Despite the overall high level of education, 85% of respondents were concentrated in lower-level white collar jobs (43%) such as sales or secretarial work and blue collar work (42%) such as machine operator or food service worker (Wilson & Allen, 1987).

The respondents' parents were very similar to the respondents in their occupational attainment. Both generations were concentrated in lower-level white collar and blue collar occupations: 26% of mothers, 39% of fathers, and 42% of the

respondents were lower-level white collar workers. Blue collar employment accounted for the occupations of 25% of respondents' mothers, 43% of fathers, and 42% of the respondents. Unlike their parents, high achieving respondents attended high schools that were either predominantly white (34%) or racially balanced (25%) (Wilson & Allen, 1987).

Socioeconomic factors also played a dominant role in college destination when considering institutional quality (Hearn, 1984). Hearn conducted a study with a randomly selected sample of 5,211 first time college freshmen student. African-American and female students whose parents had lower incomes and lower educational attainments and students who had a larger number of siblings were less likely to attend highly selective institutions.

Kerr et al. (1992) found a close relationship between ACT scores and socioeconomic status. They profiled the characteristics, needs, and plans of minority students who achieved at or above the 95 percentile (ACT composite score of 28 or above) on the comprehensive score for the ACT in the spring of 1988. More than 1 million students take the examination every year. Of the 53,335 high school juniors and seniors who scored at or above the 95 percentile, approximately 9% were minority students. The 9% were underrepresentative of the 17% of minority students who took the AP examination.

Ethnic groups with the highest poverty rates were the most underrepresented among top scorers. Only .8% of African Americans scored at or above the 95 percentile, although they composed 9% of the total test takers. Native Americans

composed 1% of test takers and represented .3% of top scores. Mexican Americans composed 2.5% of test takers, and .7% of top scores. Hispanics composed 1.1% of test takers and .7% of top scores. White students composed 81.0% of test takers and 90.9% of top scores (Kerr et al., 1992).

Despite the close relationship between socioeconomic status and ACT scores, high achievers were found in low socioeconomic environment. Top scorers who lived in families that earned less than \$18 thousand per year, below the poverty level for American families, included 15% of African Americans, 24% of Native Americans, 17% of Mexican Americans, 10% of Hispanics and 8.7% of Asian Americans (Kerr et al., 1992).

Socioeconomic factors also affect educational aspirations. Solorzano (1992) conducted a study on social class and educational aspirations. Baseline data were drawn from the eighth-grade cohort of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey of 1988. The socioeconomic composite score was disaggregated into four quartiles: low, low-middle, high-middle, and high. Regardless of racial group, students' educational aspirations rose as their socioeconomic status rose. In all but the highest socioeconomic quartile, African-American male and female students had higher aspirations than white students; in all but the high socioeconomic quartile, both African-American and white females had higher aspirations than their male counterparts; and regardless of racial group, a significant difference existed between actual educational attainment and students' aspirations, and this gap was much wider for African-American students than for white students.

Regardless of racial group membership, as socioeconomic level rose, so did students' perceptions of maternal aspirations, parental educational expectations for their children, and students' occupational expectations for themselves. In all but the mid-high socioeconomic quartile, African-American males and females held higher perceived maternal aspirations than white students (Solorzano, 1992).

Regardless of racial group, parental expectations increased with social class. African-American parents indicated overall higher expectations than white parents, and in all but the high socioeconomic quartile, both African-American and white parents held higher educational expectations for their daughters than for their sons. Regardless of racial group membership, a significant gap existed between actual occupational attainment and students' occupational expectations.

Another study which compared aspirations of African-American and white students by socioeconomic status was conducted by Kerr et al. (1992). The researchers said African-Americans' college plans for academic majors did not diverge greatly from the plans of white students. Students of all ethnic groups overwhelmingly preferred majors in business, engineering, premed, and prelaw. Fewer than 1% of any ethnic group expressed interest in agriculture, architecture, education, home economics, community service, or trades. The exception to this uniformity was the extraordinary number of African-American students (35.4%) who were interested in engineering specialties. Interest in engineering was high in all ethnic groups except Asians, with more than one third entering life sciences and very likely, medical school. Of this group, 29.5% expressed an interest in entering the

health science field, and 8% expressed an interest in entering biological science. Kerr et al. (1992) also found that minority students from poverty backgrounds preferred social science, including prelaw.

These findings were similar to the finding from a study by the College Board in which minority AP students were found to have high academic and career aspirations (Coley & Casserly, 1992). More than two thirds of 509 AP respondents from 8 high schools nationwide said they intended to pursue graduate degrees and more that one third intended to pursue a doctoral or related degree and another third planned to pursue a master's degree, while nearly 20% were undecided about their plans. These finding concurred with the study by Kerr et al. (1992) in which students' choice of career fields centered on business, medicine, law, and engineering. Chosen career fields in the College Board study were as follows: business or economics, 24%; medicine, 22%; science or math, 22%; law, 17%; engineering, 15%; communications, 12%; social science or psychology, 11%; art or fine arts, 8%; elementary or secondary teaching, 6%; government, 6%; international relations or foreign language, 5%; architecture or design, 5%; other, 3%; military, 2%; philosophy or theology, 1%; athletics, less than 1%; technical, less than 1% (Coley & Casserly, 1992, pp. 23-25).

Conflicts Experienced by High Achieving African-American Students

Fordham (1985) studied the conflict experienced by academically successful African-American students. Fordham's sample was taken from students enrolled in

AP classes in a predominantly African-American high school in Washington D.C. According to Fordham, high academic achievement was attained by "acting white," which resulted in the simultaneous acceptance and rejection by high achieving African-American students of the behaviors necessary for academic success.

A partial list of behaviors African-American students in Fordham's (1985) study identified as "acting white" included speaking standard English; listening to white music, white radio stations, or classical music; spending time studying in the library; working hard to get good grades in school; attending the opera, ballet, or symphony; doing volunteer work; being on time; reading and writing poetry; visiting the Smithsonian; going camping, hiking or mountain climbing; and, "putting on airs." African-American students who engaged in these activities were frequently perceived by their peers as "being kind of white" and not truly African American. Tension existed between those students who "acted white" and achieved academically, and students who limited their behaviors to those sanctioned by the group.

According to Fordham (1985), high achieving African-American students who made a conscious decision to pursue school success were vulnerable to the accusation of "acting white," and developed sex-specific strategies for coping with the accusation of "acting white." Males who took AP classes were ridiculed as being homosexuals. Males therefore avoided a studious image and questions about their manhood by the appearance of lack of effort for high grades was critical to acceptance by lower achieving peers. Males were also able to minimize hostility from lower achieving peers by participating in activities that were perceived by all student to be for the

good of the school. This included athletic activities and membership in the school band.

High achieving African-American girls also developed strategies to cope with accusations of "acting white" but were less constrained on what was considered proper academic behavior by their peer group. Girls coped by not bragging about their academic success or bringing attention to themselves, and, like the boys, developed an outwardly comedic personality. A male or female identified as a comedian was not taken seriously, and his or her efforts to achieve academically were not perceived as threatening to the peer group. High achieving girls tried to maintain high grades while appearing invisible in the school context and consciously underplaying their academic achievements. They also usually received reassurance from teachers, parents, and school officials that academic success was commendable. They were encouraged in their separation from peers and the popular negative stereotypes generally ascribed to African Americans (Fordham, 1985).

Fordham conducted a second study (1986) on the conflict and social separation experienced by high achieving African-American students. In this study, Fordham coined the term "racelessness." Racelessness is a method of social mobility for high achieving African-American females. These students internalized the values, ideals and beliefs learned in school and incorporated them into their behavior pattern in their family and community environments. The female high achievers vacillated between inconspicuousness among their less successful peers and carefully constructed racelessness in the presence of their teachers and other representatives of the dominant

social system. High achieving males, however, voiced commitment to the ideology of the American social system, and conflict and uncertainty about their dual relationship with the larger dominant society and the African-American community (Fordham, 1986).

The conflict resulting from this dual relationship might be solved by the assimilation of minorities into the mainstream school culture. According to Ogbu (1990) the crossing of cultural boundaries is the necessary responsibility of minorities who wish to succeed academically. Minority groups who have succeeded academically did so because they defined school cultural differences as barriers to overcome to achieve their desired education. The assimilation of the language and culture of the schools did not necessitate the renunciation of their own culture or language. They were able to maintain the use of ethnic language or dialect in the community and standard English in school.

Minorities who resisted assimilation into the school culture defined their language and cultural differences as markers of their collective identity that must be maintained. Ogbu (1990) said resistance to assimilation into the predominant school culture was counterproductive to academic success.

Clark (1991) used the term "bicultural identity" to refer to the coping behaviors high achieving African-American students demonstrated. Clark studied resilient behaviors that led to school competence among African-American students. These high achieving students were socialized into mainstream society, yet maintained strong ties with their ethnic group, had extensive interactions in both environments,

were able to adjust to different environmental demands, and did not perceive racism as barriers to success.

The best predictor of social competence for African-American students was the number of reciprocated friendships with peers who had positive attitudes towards school. Peers' positive attitudes significantly predicted grades, achievement tests scores, and the value placed on being good students (Clark, 1991). Mickelson (1990) also concluded that peers' positive attitudes towards school were significant in the success of African-American students. Mickelson said the most powerful predictor of grade point average was a student's race, followed by the proportion of his or her close friends who planned to attend a four year college.

However, some African-American students perceive school as a symbol of the dominant culture, which communicates both directly and indirectly that to succeed, African Americans must become "un-Black" (Ford-Harris, Schuerger, & Harris, 1991). Consequently, gifted African-American students might sabotage their chances at success outside of the African-American community in order to reinforce the belief that they are still legitimate members of the African-American community (Ford-Harris et al., 1991). Academic sabotage takes the form of underachievement and dropping out of school. When gifted underachieving African-American students attend predominantly white schools, they may become even more confused about which culture to support.

The value conflicts between cultures have negative effects on the psychological development of African-American students because two penalties accompany rejection

of the African-American culture. Not only does the African-American community reject the gifted African-American child, but the gifted African-American child also suffers psychologically, emotionally and socially (Ford-Harris et al., 1991).

Another study indicated that gifted African-American students, regardless of gender, were more supportive of the American achievement ideology or work ethic and less likely to underachieve than their nongifted counterparts (Ford & Harris, 1992). However, some gifted African-American students rejected school when they perceived it as benefiting white students rather than African-American students, and chose to excel athletically rather than academically (Ford & Harris, 1992).

African-American students also had conflicting attitudes about education based on their life experiences. Mickelson (1990) said all students, both white and African-American, had two sets of attitudes about education: abstract and concrete. Abstract attitudes, according to Mickelson, are found in the dominant ideology of American society. This view is based on cultural values which express an ideal connection between education and opportunity, and which holds education as the vehicle for upward mobility. Concrete attitudes are situation specific and reflect the empirical realities people experience between education and opportunity. Students' concrete attitudes develop as they perceive whether significant adults in their lives receive equitable wages, jobs, and promotions relative to their educational credentials.

Mickelson (1990) found that middle class adults, whose job returns were commensurate with their education, generally had children who held positive beliefs about education and who demonstrated high academic achievement. Children of

minority and working class adults had more pessimistic concrete attitudes toward education and were low academic achievers. Mickelson concluded that concrete attitudes covaried with and predicted scholastic achievement among African-American students: the more optimistic students felt about the value of education for their futures, the better they preformed academically. African-American students viewed education as the means to escape poverty, yet the importance they placed on education was not matched by academic success. Mickelson termed this the "attitude-achievement paradox."

Similar conclusions were reached by Ford and Harris (1992) in their study on African-American achievement. The researchers found that both African-American males and females supported the American achievement ideology, yet underachieved, and males had lower grade point averages and reported lower levels of effort than females. Hale-Benson (1982) found that African-American mothers had high aspirations for their children's academic success, yet did not have the personal values needed to realize those aspirations. This was especially true among mothers in the lowest income levels.

African-American students' differing ideologies on education have led to a significant shift in the aspirations of African Americans toward academic achievement and social mobility (Ford-Harris et al., 1991). Previous generations defined the success of one African-American person as success for all African Americans, but currently, success is defined individually (Ford-Harris et al. 1991).

Effects of Tracking on Achievement

Disproportionate numbers of minority students, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, are placed in tracks for low ability or non-college bound students and are consistently underrepresented in programs for the talented and gifted (Oakes, 1989, p. 178). Six out of 10 special placements for white students are for gifted and talented programs, while only 1 out of 10 special placements for African-American students are for gifted and talented programs (McLaren, 1988).

Although African-American and Hispanic students are underrepresented in college preparatory classes, African-American and Hispanic enrollment in academically oriented high school classes is increasing at a higher rate than white enrollment (Murphy, 1989). Furthermore, academically rigorous courses have been increasing at lower socioeconomic schools.

This is important because membership in the college preparatory track has a positive influence on student achievement. Successful completion of academic courses and enrollment in an academic track is perhaps the primary factor explaining student achievement (Murphy, 1989). Enrollment in an academic track is a fundamental predictor of learning opportunities in public and secondary education (Kilgore, 1991).

However, tracking appears to consistently disadvantage those not placed in the top group. In a study by Ford and Harris (1992) many African-American students said they did not put forth their optimal effort in school. This suggests they have the ability to achieve at higher levels. However, in lower tracks, students miss exposure to higher levels of educational activity (Pine & Hilliard, 1990).

Track placement tends to be fixed and long-term, and when mobility occurs, it is usually in a downward direction (Oakes, 1989 p. 177-178). McLaren (1988) said tracking fosters the illusion of meritocratic competition, but in reality legitimizes differences based on race, gender, and social power, and locks students into positions of limited opportunity. Time spent in school becomes burdensome and leads to dropping-out as students receive knowledge unrelated to their lives in socially degrading low class placement (McLaren, 1988). The net effect of tracking is to exaggerate initial differences among students, to harm poor and minority students disproportionately, to deny students equal access to knowledge and understanding, to place African-American and Hispanic children in low ability and non-college bound groups, and to widen the educational gap between students of different socioeconomic status (Pine & Hilliard, 1990).

The segregation of students due to class placement has a detrimental effect on academic achievement because peers have considerable influence on student achievement. Students in different academic tracks are less likely to become friends and exert less influence on each other in shaping college plans than peers in the same track (Hallinan & Williams, 1990). Adolescents seek out friends with similarity in physical characteristics, attitudes, personality, and academic ability (Clark, 1991). However, tracking imposes proximity among some students, increasing their interactions and academic experiences, while separating other students, decreasing their academic interactions, and providing them with different academic goals (Hallinan & Williams, 1990).

Friends with similar characteristics are viewed as trustworthy (Hallinan & Williams, 1990). Students are likely to believe a peer's advice about the advantages and disadvantages of college attendance because their similar characteristics suggest similar goals (Kilgore, 1991). Peers also exert considerable influence on students' choices when students lack information about the consequences of their track choices. This is particularly true of students whose parents did not attend college and who have not consulted with school staff (Kilgore, 1991).

Students in the academic and vocational tracks differed sharply in their college plans and attendance (Hallinan & Williams, 1991). Students in the academic track had higher aspirations and outcomes than student in the vocational track, and students with a best friend in the academic track had the highest aspirations and rates of college attendance.

Wilson-Sadberry et al. (1991) found that students who continued their education after high school were twice as likely to have been in the same academic track compared with those who did not continue their education. Of those who did not continue their education, 83% had been in vocational and general tracks during high school.

Wilson-Sadberry et al. (1991) found that 61% of African-American students who continued their education described their best friend in their senior year of high school as having a strong academic profile. The best friend received good grades, was interested in school, attended classes regularly, and planned to go to college. By

contrast, only 40% of African-American males who did not continue their education past high school reported having friends with strong academic profiles.

Hallinan and Williams (1990) studied cross-race and cross-gender peer influence in academic attainment using a national sample of over 5,800 high school sophomores and seniors from over 1 thousand public, private, and parochial schools. They found that although cross-race friendships were rare, African-American students who had white friends had higher academic aspirations and outcomes than African-American students who had African-American friends. Also, both African-American and white students who had cross-race friendships had higher educational aspirations and outcomes than did those with same race friendships. However, African Americans had higher educational aspirations than whites, but were less likely than white students to be attending college two years after high school graduation.

Once in college, the most important determinant of a student's college adjustment was his or her friendship network (Clark, 1991). African-American students who had interracial friendships in high school had better academic and social adjustment in college than those who had only African-American friends in high school. The college drop-out rate was 38% for those who had some white friends during high school versus 63% for those who had only African-American friends during high school. Once in college, continued exposure to the predominately white college environment resulted in adjustment gains for African Americans, especially for those who previously had only African-American friends (Clark, 1991).

Additional race and class differentiation occurs within vocational tracks, with African Americans and Hispanics more frequently enrolled in programs that train for the lowest-level occupations (Duke, 1989). Low track students are taught low status knowledge that has little exchange value in a social or economic sense (McLaren, 1988). Homogeneous grouping and lower track ability grouping cease to serve the interests of minority students when they cannot escape their placement and begin to accept their status as low achievers (Duke, 1989). Pullout programs designed to provide remedial or compensatory assistance can have a similar effect (Duke, 1989). Race and social class placement differences occur whether test scores, counselor and teacher recommendations, or student and parent choices are the basis for placement (Oakes, 1989, p. 178).

The increasing alienation and school failure of minorities, especially at-risk African-American students, is related to the decline of minority teachers (Irvine, 1989). Only 8.5% of all teachers are minorities (McLaren, 1988). African-American teachers decrease student alienation because they understand African-American students' behavior, physical movements, verbal and nonverbal language, values, world views, home environments, and learning styles, and they serve as cultural translators for students whose school and home cultures differ (Irvine, 1989).

The distrust between African-American students and white teachers often leads to teachers' misperceptions of African-American students' behavior. White educators are more likely to perceive the misconduct of African-American students as serious

disciplinary infractions, yet tolerate the same behaviors from white students. Consequently, minority students receive harsher punishments, especially suspensions and expulsions, than nonminority students (Duke, 1989).

Teachers' perceptions of students by race also affects the informal academic standards by which teachers reward students' general skills, habits, and styles (Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, & Shaun, 1990). Farkas et al. (1990) found that African-American teachers reported marginally better work habits for African-American and Hispanic students than for white students and white teachers reported the opposite pattern. Teacher judgments of students' disruptiveness showed that African-American teachers judged African-American students to be more disruptive than did white teachers. Farkas et al. (1990) suggested that three reasons for these findings were that the higher disruptiveness rating is a natural concomitant of a more intensive interaction pattern; African-American teachers have particularly high aspirations for their African-American students and hold them to a higher standard of conduct than do white teachers; and African-American teachers are disproportionately assigned to classes or schools with the most disruptive African-American students. However, absenteeism decreased markedly and work habits improved when African-American students were taught by African-American teachers.

Teachers judged low-income students as having weaker basic skills and less pleasing appearances than higher income students, but as less disruptive. However, African-American students were reported to have weaker basic skills and to be more

disruptive than white students (Farkas et al., 1990). Student appearance and dress was significant and negatively related to course work mastery but the magnitude was small. There was no evidence that white teachers discriminated against minority students when assigning course grades. However, interactions among student characteristics, teacher characteristics, student basic skills, and noncognitive variables (student behavior, and teacher judgments of student behavior) were successful in accounting for individual variations in course grade attainment.

In a study on the status of African-American males in the New Orleans school district, Garibaldi (1992) concluded the declining status of African-American males, as evidenced by their overwhelming representation in the criminal justice system and their last place ranking on many measures of educational performance have led many educators to view these males' futures as impossible to salvage. Furthermore, the data revealed that teachers held negative self-fulfilling prophecies for these males.

For this study, Garibaldi (1992) surveyed more than 2,250 African-American males. Of this sample, 95% reported they expected to graduate from high school. However, 40% said their teachers did not set high enough goals for them, and 60% said their teachers should push them harder. Males and females responded similarly. Three hundred and eighteen teachers responded to a survey for Garibaldi's (1992) study. When asked if they believed their African-American male students would go to college, almost 6 out of every 10 teachers responded in the negative. Of the teachers surveyed, 60% taught in elementary schools, 70% had 10 or more years of teaching experience, and 65% of the teachers were African American. The survey

results indicated that negative expectations for African-American male students existed in the early school years (Garibaldi, 1992).

Eight out of 10 of the 3,523 parents surveyed indicated they believed their sons expected to go to college (Garibaldi, 1992). However, one fourth of these parents had never attended a teacher-parent conference. Garibaldi concluded this might have led teachers to believe the parents were unconcerned about their children's progress, which confirmed the teachers' negative beliefs about the futures of the African-American males they taught.

A study of the influences of cultural and ecological backgrounds of students, as mediated by their families, to explain academic success or failure was conducted by Slaughter-Defoe, Nakagawa, Takanishi, & Johnson (1990). The researchers found significant gaps in research about African-American achievement socialization. The primary focus of research in African-American achievement centered on lower income African-American families with little attention to diversity among the families. Existing research provided a wide range of explanations for African-American underachievement, which included father absence, poverty, and distinctive African-American cognitive styles which led to a mismatch between teaching methods and student needs. Other explanations included gender differences, with higher female academic achievement and male achievement unpredictable from third grade through high school; understimulation at school; fewer sociocognitive skills; family religiosity that inversely affected school competence; peer group culture supportive of negative attitudes toward school; caste-like history that led to a distrust of

extrafamilial institutions; and job ceilings regardless of educational attainment. With few exceptions, the effects of father absence persisted in the African-American research literature (Slaughter-Defoe et al., 1990).

Summary

A review of the literature on high achieving African-American students clearly indicates that African-American students face many obstacles to academic success. These obstacles must be addressed by educators if African-American students are to become part of the mainstream of the educational system. First, although AP and gifted programs have grown, African Americans are underrepresented in these classes. The research shows that the identification process for gifted classes fails to recognize minority students who could benefit from this academic opportunity. Conversely, African Americans are overrepresented in classes for low ability students. This has the effect of further limiting their educational opportunities by narrowing their contact with high achieving peers and enriched curricula.

Second, parental influence is a critical factor in the student's ability to internalize the value of education as meaningful. Parental support for education is more significant in motivating students to succeed than family member configuration, parental income, social class, or educational level. However, research data show that parents at lower socioeconomic levels have less congruence between their high educational aspirations for their children and their own value system. These parents do not teach their children values that would lead to academic success. The lower the

socioeconomic status of the parents, the lower the congruence between their aspirations and values. Consequently, students of higher socioeconomic levels are more likely to experience the crucial parental enforcement of values which lead to academic success.

Third, students who are academically successful often experience rejection by the rest of the African-American culture. They are accused of "acting white." This rejection leads students to react in diverse ways. Some students try to become invisible or "raceless." Some underplay the importance of academic success by the use of humor or by silence. Others sabotage their own chances of success. The research shows that in order to succeed academically, students must address the issue of how to simultaneously be members of both the success oriented white culture and the African-American culture.

Finally, African-American students must accept the connection between academic achievement and social success. Only by taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the school system, such as the AP program, will African-Americans students become competitive for college admission and graduation, and only then will their aspirations match their achievement. At the same time, minority achievement must be recognized through educational, job, and professional opportunities so African-American students can learn to believe their efforts will be rewarded.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the AP program at two high schools in order to discover whether or not program differences can be explained by the racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level. As a result of this study, the following questions were answered.

1. What are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?
2. To what extent is the implementation of those criteria consistent between the two schools?
3. How do students in the two AP programs compare in their previous academic preparations?
4. How do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?
5. How do the two schools compare in the teachers' implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?
6. What characterizes students' descriptions and evaluations of their AP classes at the two schools?

7. How do AP students' SAT, ACT, GPA, and AP examination scores compare at the two schools?

8. How do students' academic aspirations compare at the two schools?

This study was conducted using case study methodology. Yin (1989, p. 23) defined case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. In this study, the boundaries between the AP program and its racial and socioeconomic boundaries were not clearly evident and were investigated in the real life context of the school setting through multiple sources of evidence.

One of the assumptions which underlies qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; not a single, fixed, objective phenomena (Merriam, 1988, p. 167). The researcher presented the multiple interpretations of the informants' experiences in AP classes in order to develop a complete, holistic description of the AP program in two different schools. Concrete depiction of detail, portrayal of process in an active mode, and attention to the perspectives of those studied are the strengths of qualitative research (Firestone, 1986).

Data collection methods included interviews with students, teachers, vice principals, and guidance counselors. Classroom observations, photographs, and information obtained from students' academic records were also used. Data collection

methods for this study were in keeping with the nature of case study research, which "seeks holistic description and explanation" (Merriam, 1988, p. 10).

Case study also has a distinctive advantage as a research strategy when a "how" or "why" question is asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or not control (Yin, 1989, p. 20). These two conditions were present in this study.

Entry

The researcher went to the Student Information Management System Office at the county School Board where this study was conducted to examine records on the racial composition of high schools in the county. The researcher selected two high schools for the study based on their widely divergent racial compositions. After selecting the schools for this study, the researcher contacted the vice principals of both high schools and explained the purpose of the study. After the initial contact, the researcher sent the vice principals sample interview questions as well as a statement of purpose for the study. The vice principals conferred with their principals. Both principals granted permission to the researcher to proceed with the study. Both principals agreed to permit the researcher to conduct interviews and classroom observations for 10 days at each school.

The researcher secured permission for this study from the University of Florida Institutional Review Board because subjects under the age of 18 were included

in the sample. The researcher also secured informed consent from the subjects' parents.

Setting

Anderson High School

Pseudonyms have been used in this study to identify the schools and all persons interviewed. Anderson High School is located in a solidly middle to upper middle class suburban section of a large city. This suburban area has a predominantly white population.

Anderson High is three years old and has been well maintained. It is two stories high, with open walkways and a large courtyard. The school faces a lake on one side, a road on another side, and undeveloped land on the remaining two sides. The nearby residential neighborhood consists of middle to upper middle class housing developments. The nearby stores blend unobtrusively into the surrounding area. The streets are clean and lined with trees.

During the 1992-1993 academic year, Anderson High School had a total student population of 2,058 students. Of those students, 1,032 students, or 50.1% were male, and 1,026 or 49.9% were female. The racial breakdown was as follows: 1,729 students or 84.0% were white; 243 students, or 11.8% were African Americans; 37 students, or 1.8% were Spanish Americans; 5 students, or 0.2% were Native Americans; and 44 students, or 2.1% were Asian Americans.

Anderson High School has nine AP classes which include American history, European history, comparative political systems, American government, English,

Spanish, French, Latin, and psychology. Anderson High School is not permitted by court order to offer AP courses in science and math. When Anderson was scheduled to open for classes, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sought a court order to block the opening of the school. The NAACP's stated goal was greater desegregation in the school system. To achieve this end, the NAACP requested that Anderson High School be barred from offering math and science courses. Instead, the NAACP requested those two courses be offered at Lincoln High School, an inner-city school which had a predominantly African-American student body. The NAACP reasoned this act would encourage students who would have attended Anderson for math and science AP courses to attend Lincoln High School instead, which would further the integration of the school system.

Baker High School

Baker High School is located in an economically depressed part of the city which has a large African-American and low-income white population. The neighborhood has a reputation as a high crime area. Baker High School is 28 years old and was undergoing repainting for the duration of this study. The school is surrounded by a chain link fence. It faces a middle school on one side, low-income housing on another side, and streets filled with stores on the remaining two sides. There are many signs and billboards on every block.

For the 1992-1993 school year, Baker High School had 936 students. Of those students, 450 students, or 48.1% were male, and 486 or 51.9% were female. The racial breakdown was as follows: 251 students or 26.8% were white; 677 students, or 72.3% were African Americans; 3 students, or .3% were Spanish Americans; 0 students, or .0% were Native Americans; and 5 students, or .5% were Asian Americans.

Baker High School has three AP classes. These classes include American history, English, and biology.

Procedures for Data Collection

Case study, in its simplest form, involves an investigator who makes a detailed examination of a single subject or group or phenomena (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 488). This study used a cross-case design.

Cross-case studies involve collecting and analyzing data from several cases. Each case is treated as a comprehensive case and data are gathered to learn as much as possible about the contextual variables that might have a bearing on the case (Merriam, 1988, p. 154). By studying more than one case, the researcher increases the potential for generalizing beyond the particular case and "seeks to build abstractions across cases" (Merriam, 1988, p. 154).

Data from Interviews

Interviews provide the researcher with immediate feedback. Interviews also enable the researcher to follow up leads to obtain more data and greater clarity as well as permit greater depth than other methods of collecting research data (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 436).

The researcher conducted student interviews from two AP classrooms in each school. Students were interviewed from each class through individual and group interviews. During each group interviews, the researcher interviewed four to eight students.

The AP English and American history teachers at each school were interviewed individually. An American history and English teacher from a standard class were also interviewed at each school. This added to the data by providing information on how the AP program was perceived by teachers outside of the AP program. In addition, the vice principal and two guidance counselors at each school were interviewed. In total, there were 14 adult interviews. All interviews lasted approximately an hour each. The lengths of the interviews varied, with more time allotted for those who wished to prolong the interviews beyond an hour. Long interviews were used because they provided the interviewer with "the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves" (McCracken, 1989, p. 9). This perspective is critical to case study because "qualitative researchers are interested in meaning--how people make sense of

their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences, how they structure their social worlds" (Merriam, 1988, p. 19).

An interview guide was constructed prior to the interviews. The guide ensured that the investigator covered all the terrain in the same order for each respondent and enabled the investigator to give complete attention to the informant's testimony (McCracken, 1989, pp. 78-79).

Questions were open-ended or "semistructured" as much as possible. The semistructured interview provides a combination of depth and objectivity and often permits gathering valuable data and a more thorough understanding of the respondents' opinions and the reasons behind them (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 442).

To avoid incorrect interpretations of the interviews, all interviews were recorded on tape and a verbatim transcript of the interviews was created (McCracken, 1989, p. 41). Tape recorders were used because they reduce the tendency of the interviewer to make an unconscious selection of data favoring his or her biases and enable the interviewer to reanalyze the taped interview data (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 446).

Patton (Merriam, 1989, pp. 78-79) said six kinds of questions can be used to derive a variety of information from respondents: experience/behavior questions; opinion/value questions; feeling questions; knowledge questions; sensory questions; and background/demographic questions. The researcher designed the interview guide so that all six kinds of questions were represented. After the interviews were conducted, interview data were transcribed into an interview log.

Data from Classroom Observations

The researcher observed each AP class on 5 separate occasion for a total of 20 observations. Observations were used in addition to interviews to ensure the accuracy of information collected during interviews. Borg and Gall (1983) said when people are interviewed, they often bias information about themselves and sometimes they cannot accurately recall events and aspects of their behavior in which the researcher is interested. "The observational method, if used properly, overcomes these limitations of the self-report method." (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 465)

Data from Photographs

Photographs were taken of the exterior and interior of the school, and of the classrooms used for this study. The purpose of the photographs was to present "an overview of the culture or setting which allows all details to be seen within a context" (Collier, 1979).

The photographs were used to embellish the description of the settings at both school. The photographs were also used as part of the student interviews. Students were asked to look at the photographs and describe their responses. The answers were coded and analyzed for themes and comparisons between the two schools.

Data from Students' Academic Records

The researcher reviewed the academic records of students who participated in this study. The purpose of reviewing records was to add to the descriptive data of the AP program at both schools. Data included students' SAT, ACT, GPA, and AP examination scores. Documentation provides specific details to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources and should be included in case study research (Yin, 1989, pp. 86-87). Documentation also often provides easily accessible, free information that would take an investigator enormous time and effort to gather on his or her own (Merriam, 1983, p. 108).

Data Analysis

A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence (Yin, 1989, p. 96). Data for this case study were derived from observations, interviews, photographs, and students' records. The most important advantage of using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, or triangulation (Yin, 1989, p. 97). The value of triangulation is that it provides evidence from which researchers can construct meaningful propositions about the social world (Mathison, 1988).

Data were collected and analyzed simultaneously. According to Merriam (1988, p. 145) data collection and analysis should occur simultaneously because it

helps the researcher direct the data collection phase more productively and develop a more relevant and parsimonious data base.

Data were analyzed by using the file-folder method detailed by Merriam (1983, p. 138). A photocopy was made of the entire data base, which included interview transcripts, notes taken during classroom observations, and students' records. The researcher worked through each page of the copied data and wrote notes in the margins, including tentative categories or themes that emerged from the raw data. The photocopied pages were cut into data units and coded sections placed in file folders labeled by category or theme. Each unit of data was coded by category and by its original page number and any other identifying codes, such as respondents' names, so that each cut-up piece of information could be located later in the master copy.

The researcher also used what Merriam (1983, p. 155) terms an "unordered meta-matrix," or large chart organized by variables that contain key information such as phrases, quotes, or other illustrations of the categories. This helped in the development of patterns and in the explanation of the interrelationship of variables. The researcher clustered similar information into categories to find themes, patterns, and relationships between variables (Merriam, 1988, pp. 149-152). These methods were appropriate because data analysis for case study evidence consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence, to address the initial propositions of a study (Yin, 1989, p. 105).

The purpose of data analysis is to "move from concrete description of observable data to a more abstract level using concepts to describe phenomena" and to "develop a theory that explains some aspect of educational practice and allows one to draw inferences about future activity" (Merriam, 1988, pp. 140-141). Data were analyzed to explain and draw inferences about AP classes in schools with different socioeconomic and racial compositions.

Internal Validity

Internal validity addresses how the researcher's findings match reality. Validity must be assessed in terms of interpreting the investigator's experience rather than in terms of reality itself (Merriam, 1983, p. 167). The researcher observes people's constructions of reality or how they understand the world. The validity of a study, then, rests upon the investigator showing that she or he has represented those multiple constructions adequately. Merriam (1988, p. 168) stated that when the qualitative researcher presents the perspectives of the informants and how they view themselves and their experiences, internal validity is a definite strength of qualitative research. The researcher must "uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening" (Merriam, 1983, p. 168).

The following four factors lend support to the claim of high internal validity: continual data analysis and comparison to refine constructs and to ensure the match between scientific categories and participant reality; informant interviews phrased

close to the empirical categories of participants; observations in the natural setting of participants; and data analysis that utilizes continual questioning and reevaluation (Merriam, 1983, pp. 168-169). The researcher followed these guidelines by analyzing the data continually during the course of the study, phrasing interview questions with an awareness of the age and experiences of the interviewees, and rephrasing or rewriting questions which were unclear to the persons interviewed. Observations were conducted in the students' daily classroom setting, and during the course of the study the researcher continually reevaluated information to ensure that data collected fit in with the purpose of the study.

Merriam (1983, pp. 169-170) listed six methods to ensure internal validity. The researcher utilized four of these methods to ensure internal validity. Those methods included triangulation, taking data back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results were plausible, repeated observations of the same phenomenon, and clarifying the researcher's assumptions at the outset of the study (Merriam, 1983, pp. 169-170).

External Validity

External validity is generalizing a study's findings beyond the immediate study. Case studies rely on analytical, not statistical, generalizations; therefore, external validity is not applicable to case studies (Yin, 1989, p. 43).

Reliability

Reliability, or the extent to which one's findings can be replicated, is problematic in the social sciences because human behavior is not static (Merriam, 1988, p. 170). However, the researcher can ensure that his or her results are dependable by describing in detail the social context from which data was collected, triangulation, and describing in detail how data were collected and how categories were derived (Merriam, 1988, p. 172).

Biases

The researcher has been a special education teacher for 11 years and acknowledges a predisposition to view the AP program in a positive light. Every effort was made to record unbiased, accurate data.

CHAPTER 4

ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAMS IN TWO DIVERSE SCHOOL SETTINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the AP program at two high schools to determine if program differences can be explained by racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level. Two high schools with diverse racial and socioeconomic compositions were selected for this study. Students, faculty, and staff were interviewed, and classroom observations were conducted in order to gain a complete description of the AP program at each school. Interviews and observations were conducted in the spring of 1993. Students' records were examined in the spring and summer of 1993 to obtain students' standardized test scores and AP exam results. Data were collected from a variety of sources to present a holistic description of the AP program at each school.

The two schools selected for this study were located in different socioeconomic environments. Anderson High School is located in an affluent, upper-middle class neighborhood in a large southeastern city. The school has a predominantly white student population. The second school selected for this study, Baker High School, is located in an economically depressed neighborhood. It has a predominantly African-American student population. The researcher conducted a case study of the

AP program in each school, then compared and contrasted the AP program at each school with the other to determine the extent to which program differences can be explained by racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level.

Interviews were conducted with students and teachers from one AP English class and one AP American history class at each school. A standard English class teacher and a standard American history class teacher, a vice principal, and two guidance counselors from each school were also interviewed. The researcher observed 5 class sessions in each AP classroom for a total of 10 hours of observations at each school. The purpose of the observations was to verify the accuracy of information obtained from interviews.

Further information was obtained from students' cumulative folders. The researcher compiled students' grade point averages and standardized achievement test scores to gain a description of the average AP student's achievement level at each school. Specifically, students' SAT, ACT, GPA, and AP examination results were compiled and averaged.

The questions for which the researcher sought answers were derived from the research on AP programs and the research on African-American students' academic achievement. The following questions guided data collection in this study.

1. What are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?
2. To what extent is the implementation of those criteria consistent between the two schools?

3. How do students in the two AP programs compare in their previous academic preparation?
4. How do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?
5. How do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?
6. What characterizes students' descriptions and evaluations of their AP classes at the two schools?
7. How do AP students SAT, ACT, GPA, and AP examination scores compare at the two schools?
8. How do AP students' academic aspirations compare at the two schools?

This chapter contains three main sections. The first main section is a case study of Anderson's AP program. The second main section is a case study of Baker's AP program. Both case studies are based on information obtained from an AP American history class and an AP English class at each school. The third main section of this chapter is a comparison of the information collected and analyzed from the AP programs at both schools. The case study of each school contains four parts. The first part presents information gathered from students. This includes students' interviews, students' responses to photographs, and classroom observations. The second part of each case study includes interviews with two AP teachers and two standard curriculum teachers. The third part of each case study presents the results of

an interview with a vice principal. The fourth part presents the results of interviews with two guidance counselors.

The third main section of this chapter presents a comparison and analysis of results obtained on the AP program at Anderson High School and Baker High School. The results were compared and contrasted to answer the research question of whether AP program differences can be explained by racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level.

Anderson High School

Students' Interviews

An interview guide for students was constructed which contained 19 questions. These questions were written with the goal of gathering information which would enable the researcher to answer questions one, three, five, six, and eight as set out in the purpose of this study. Students were also shown 12 photographs of various parts of their school which depicted areas with which they came in daily contact and which represented different aspects of school life. Students were asked to describe what they thought or felt as they viewed each picture and to label each picture as evoking a positive or negative response. The purpose of this activity was to enable the researcher to identify patterns and categories of how AP students described their school environment.

Five observations were conducted in each of the 2 AP classes for a total of 10 hours of classroom observations at Anderson High School. Observations were conducted to verify the accuracy of information acquired during interviews.

Twenty-nine students were enrolled in AP American history and 27 students were enrolled in AP English. All but 3 students in the American history class and 4 students in the English class were interviewed. The researcher had no control over students' absences, senior activities, and end of the year activities which conflicted with students' schedules and class attendance. Answers to research questions were reported from the perspectives of the students interviewed. All answers, including incomplete, erroneous, or highly subjective answers, were recorded and reported verbatim to enable the researcher to present an unedited, unbiased account of how the students interviewed described the AP program.

Research question one: what are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?

Almost all AP students at Anderson High School enrolled in AP courses as a natural progression from honors courses. These students had been in honors courses since junior high school. They expected to take AP courses once they entered eleventh grade. The following answers were typical of how students entered AP classes:

I've been in the honors bracket since the eighth grade, and once you hit your junior year, you take AP.

I've taken honors English all the way up, so I might as well stay in that track.

You're always in it. It's not your choice. The teachers stick you in it.

Students reported that a B average and the teachers' recommendations in previous prerequisite honors courses were required for admission to AP classes. Students specified that to take AP American history, an A or B average in honors world history was required. An A or B in honors English was required before admission to AP English.

Students were unsure of the minimum PSAT score required for admission to AP classes. Several students reported they believed no minimum PSAT score was required. Of all the students interviewed at Anderson, 3 were in AP because their parents requested a waiver of the AP requirements.

Research question three: how do students in the two AP programs compare in their previous academic preparation?

When asked what prepared them most for academic success in AP classes, students credited their own self-motivation and personal discipline. They said parental values taught them to work hard to succeed in life and they learned study skills in previous honors classes. Note taking and reading comprehension were identified as the most important study skills acquired in previous honors courses. Students were also encouraged by their parents to do well in school to prepare for college. The overwhelming reason cited for taking AP classes was to earn college credit. All the students interviewed planned to attend college.

AP is a good way to prepare for college. It gets you used to the way the classes really are in college, and you get college credit.

I want to skip English in college and get college credit.

I took it to have a challenge and to get the credit.

Before entering the AP program, students said their AP class expectations included hard work, numerous writing assignments, college-level lectures, and a large amount of studying. Most of the students appeared to be strongly self-motivated and willing to work hard to meet the course requirements.

I expected a lot of hard work. I expected college work, but it's up to you, not the teacher, to push you.

I expected a lot of writing in AP English, which we got!

The AP students expressed pride in their mature study skills, which they said were derived from teachers' expectations in honors classes and reinforced by parental expectations. Most of the AP students had been in honors classes since junior high school, and were accustomed to parents' and teachers' expectations for academic achievement.

What prepared me the most was a sense of responsibility for myself. I've always been taught it's my responsibility to do my work and not have anybody check up on me.

My parents don't check up on me. It's sort of a self-discipline. They might ask how I'm doing, but they don't check up on me.

It took a while for me. In around ninth grade I changed and started working hard. The honors classes train you to do that because it's your responsibility. You have to do the studying, and your teachers tell you that. We're told we have to read so many pages by such and such a date, and it's up to us to do it.

Participation in AP classes had the effect of segregating the AP students from the school population. AP students came in contact with standard students on a limited basis, mainly through elective courses. The AP students verbalized a strong

belief that they were different from standard students, whom they described as immature and unprepared for college level work. Many AP students also approved of the social separation between AP and standard students.

My sister is in standard class and writes like a sixth-grader.

My friend is in standard classes, and he asked me to type a paper for him. It was pretty bad.

I walk down the halls, and there are a lot of kids I don't know and frankly don't want to know. The other kids just aren't used to a challenge.

AP students stated the added pressure of peer competition was a factor that enforced achievement. Their self-described drive to succeed furthered the sense of separation from standard students. AP students said their values, which focused on academic achievement and hard work, separated them from standard students.

Research question five: how do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?

In both AP classes, the teachers implemented specific methods to prepare students for the AP exam. Dr. Carter, the American history teacher, conducted 14 consecutive review sessions in class and also administered daily quizzes before each review session. Each day's lecture was outlined on a transparency, which was visible to the class by the use of an overhead projector. Dr. Carter wrote main points on the outline as he lectured and held three review sessions after school.

Ms. Franklin, the AP English teacher, prepared students for the AP exam through the use of timed essays taken from previous AP exams. After the essays

were completed, students identified and analyzed weak and strong points in their essays through classroom discussions.

Dr. Carter started giving review sessions after school and that helped. A lot of people came.

The teachers prepare us for the AP exam all year, or we wouldn't be able to pass it. AP wasn't as hard as I expected, but the tests are hard.

We go through a book and analyze and hang on every word.

We write an essay and go over the passage word by word and line by line, and really break it down. Then we have to rewrite our original essay. Everything we do is broken down and analyzed. That's how we learn for the AP test.

In English I learned to organize my thoughts because we had to write outlines. The AP exam was confusing at first, but then I used an outline, and it really helped.

All students acknowledged they were adequately prepared for the AP exam.

Some students expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to perform well on the AP exam, but no one predicted he or she would fail the exam.

Research question six: what characterizes students' descriptions and evaluations of their AP classes at the two schools?

AP students were asked to describe and evaluate their AP classes. They described and compared their perceptions of AP classes with standard classes they had taken either as electives or to meet graduation requirements. Since most AP students had been in the advanced academic track since middle school, most comparisons were based on elective classes. Students also identified the most positive and negative

aspects of the AP program and described how participation in the AP program affected them personally.

Students stated the greatest difference between AP and standard classes was the treatment they received from teachers. The students said AP teachers treated them as mature adults. Students frequently cited mutual respect between teachers and students, a studious classroom atmosphere, lack of meaningless busy work, and high teacher expectations as typical of AP classes.

Dr. Carter doesn't need to give us homework because he knows we'll do what we need to do.

The teachers care more in AP classes. They care if you understand the material.

There's definitely a more adult atmosphere in AP compared to my standard class. It's amazing how much more control the teacher has. In my ecology class, kids just get up to throw things away, or to get a hall pass to go to the bathroom, and the teacher doesn't even say anything. He doesn't have any control. If you got up when Dr. Carter was talking, or went across the room to talk to someone, my gosh, there'd be no excuse for that.

Students voiced a strong dislike for what they considered to be busy work. They expected AP classes to be conducted as college courses which meant students were not given rote assignments, such as copying questions from a book and answering them, or writing down rules for classroom behavior. They also described a strong belief that their behavior was different from the behavior of students in standard classes. AP students who enrolled in standard classes described those classes as academically easy and frequently disrupted by students' misbehavior. Their descriptions of students in standard classes tended to be very negative and judgmental, and AP students often blamed standard students for vandalism and dirty conditions in

the school. AP students often described standard students as not caring about their grades, having immature and unrealistic expectations for their lives, and lacking manners.

In my standard class, half of the teacher's time was blown off trying to discipline people and its a waste of time and it's so aggravating. I just put my head down and eventually dropped the course.

In standard physics, everyone is so immature. The whole class is wasted trying to calm people down. When she does lecture, she sounds like she's talking to first graders. There are some kids who can't understand and she doesn't want to back up for them, so she just slows everybody down.

A lot of the standard kids don't even want to be at school. They're not college bound anyway. They just want to get by and play around a lot, and waste our time or go to the junior college.

The standard classes go so slow, you could just not show up and still pass, and that's what those classes are for.

I think in honors classes, they want to be there and obviously want to achieve more than in standard classes, so your priorities are in a different place. I think there's a whole different set of priorities for what you're looking for in school for people in AP compared to standard.

There's a different maturity level. I think AP kids look at school with a whole different agenda. AP kids are there to learn and to pick something up and use it as long as they need it.

In creative writing class, the teacher wrote a list on the board of 10 or 15 rules, and we had to write them down twice and sign them, one for us and one for her. A lot of them were common sense things that you know you're not supposed to do. It's ridiculous.

When asked how they thought standard classes could be improved, the AP students said teachers should raise expectations and show personal concern for students. This was explained as a way to motivate students and minimize behavior problems in class. One AP student who received a waiver to take AP American

history said he did not like standard classes because he disliked standard students' behavior and how standard teachers treated students. "The teachers teach you like little kids," he said. "I intend to stay in honors."

In some classes, you're treated like little imbeciles, and that's the role kids will play, where in AP you're expected to act a certain way and that's the way you're going to act. You're going to present a certain image.

The teachers would have more control if they had smaller classes for the slow students.

I'm one of the dumber kids in honors classes, but in my standard class, marine biology, I set the curve on every single test. If I sleep in there, I can handle it. The others are going to make an F and don't care. If I'm going to get a C or lower, then I would study and pay attention. The standard kids just think they have their credits and passed for the year, so they don't care. If the teachers expected more from them, then they would probably do more.

There has to be an entirely different attitude between teachers and students. If you cage a person, a person is going to act like an animal. If you treat kids who would be underachievers in AP as if they're stupid in standard classes, they're not going to try. Kids are treated like they're stupid. If an AP kid drops to a standard kid, he's lost in the shuffle.

Both AP and standard classes had predictable routines, but in the AP classes teachers had almost continual verbal interaction with students, which students said was not true of standard classes. As part of the daily routine in AP history, Dr. Carter reviewed previous notes with students. He also presented a prepared outline on a transparency and elaborated on the main points as he delivered his lecture, which lasted most of the period. The students listened, took notes, and asked questions. In AP English, the teacher gave the students frequent timed, in-class writing assignments which lasted most of the period. The days following a writing assignment were used for in-depth discussion and analysis of the students' work.

By contrast, students said the routines in standard classes usually consisted of short introductory lectures, followed by written assignments from the textbook. Seat work comprised most of the class period, with minimal student-teacher interaction. In comparison, interaction with the teacher was central to academic success in AP.

In Ms. Franklin's class, she makes you think. She has a general idea for the day, but if you have an idea, she will ask you what you mean by that.

Dr. Carter teaches us a lot. He wants you to learn it. He makes sure you understand it. It's like, other teachers are just there, they don't care if you do your work. They just sit at their desks. They don't lecture.

Standard kids aren't spurred on like in AP. They're not pushed by the teachers. In standard class, they just have everything planned and tell you word for word what they're going to do, but in AP they keep adding things, and keeping things up to date.

When asked specifically to name the most positive aspect of AP, the most frequently cited factor was being treated like adults. One student said "the responsibility level is way up there." As an example, he said if a student did not turn in his work on time, Dr. Carter understood because "we have it 99% of the time." Students had difficulty identifying what they would change about the AP program. When asked to grade the AP program, all gave the program As or Bs.

I'd like to see the teacher do more than lecture, because it gets boring.

We need smaller classes.

We could go a little faster at the beginning and not have to rush at the end.

There needs to be a definition of what the class is for. If it's going to be another class, like an honors class, then it's okay the way it's taught. But if it's going to be a class to prepare you for the AP test, there should be more AP test type things, more sample tests. AP tests have become as important as the SATs. I don't think we would get as much out of AP if we focused on the

AP exam because we wouldn't get all the details, but we would learn the big things for the AP exam.

When students were asked to analyze the AP program in the context of the racial and socioeconomic context of the school, they expressed appreciation for their affluent surroundings. They acknowledged they had many advantages over poorer schools. There was anger, however, at the NAACP lawsuit which resulted in the exclusion of math and science from the AP program. Students complained that these exclusions did not result in a greater movement of white students to predominantly minority schools or an influx of minority students to Anderson. Instead, Anderson's AP students enrolled in difficult science and math courses without the benefit of weighted grades or college credit. The court ruling was viewed as "unfair" and "stupid."

Furthermore, as part of the NAACP ruling, Anderson became a magnet school which offered an International Studies Program to attract minority students. This was viewed as a failure by all the students interviewed because they said it did not result in a racial balance at Anderson and the International Studies Program attracted standard students who were not fully attentive in class.

Only 1 African-American student was enrolled in the AP classes observed for this study. This student was enrolled in AP American history, and was also enrolled in African-American studies as part of the magnet program which was also taught by Dr. Carter. She said the course was "easy" and not as challenging as AP American history. She became animated and spoke angrily about the "ridiculous" magnet program, and stated "it's a joke" because she knew most of the African-American

history presented in class and made As with minimal preparation. In addition, she stated the students "don't listen" and "Dr. Carter has to tell them to be quiet." She added that the magnet program did not fulfill its purpose. "The magnet program was supposed to be doing lots for other cultures, and they're not doing that." Consequently, she intended to leave Anderson and return to the district's magnet college preparatory high school the following school year. None of the students interviewed were supportive of the magnet program or of the NAACP ruling.

Just because we're predominantly white, we're not allowed to have those courses. I don't know many people who would travel all the way downtown to take courses when they could go to Woodridge (another high school) to take them.

I've taken calculus and chemistry, and both of them are very hard, and they were unweighted. It's reverse discrimination.

It's not even helping the minorities because if a black student wanted to come over here to take advanced math and science, he couldn't take it either, so that's not helping him.

School starts at 7:20 in the morning. No one wants to drive any earlier to go to a different school across town.

I don't want to go to anywhere else to take math and science. I think I got really lucky here with the teachers.

Anderson has so much to offer, yet math and science are offered across town. We get shortchanged. Who's going to go across town to take math, and who wants to get bussed?

They're building these beautiful buildings with these beautiful facilities and teachers who are qualified to teach these courses, and then they tell us we can't teach the courses here.

I'm all for desegregation but there has to be a place where kids can learn and not worry about busing. Anderson has the International Studies Program as the magnet program, but I was in study hall during one of the classes, and it doesn't go that well. The teacher had so much trouble teaching because no

one wanted to learn. They used the magnet program as their excuse to get here.

This was done to make the NAACP happy. It's all an image thing, to have international studies here. It looks good from the outside but the students aren't happy. They don't want to be bused early in the morning.

Despite negative opinions about the magnet program and the ban on offering AP math and science, AP students did not describe Anderson as adversely affected by racial or socioeconomic factors. Instead, AP students described major differences between students to be between standard and AP students. These differences were attributed to previous school experiences and family influences, which in turn shaped different personal values. The AP students did not discuss any connections between these factors (previous school experiences, family influences, personal values) and racial and socioeconomic factors.

AP students viewed previous school experiences as heavily dependent upon teachers because teachers' praise and encouragement in elementary school gave students confidence. Academic rigor in elementary school provided students with the preparation necessary for more difficult work in junior and senior high school.

Furthermore, parental expectations that students would attend college were in existence since students' early childhoods, and AP students did not question college as an option. Family high expectations were important whether or not parents attended college.

Finally, students consistently placed high value on AP teachers' treatment of them as mature adults who could be trusted to meet deadlines. Even when students

said they did not manage time effectively and crammed before deadlines, they valued the trust and egalitarian treatment they received from their AP teachers.

AP students almost unanimously identified self-motivation as the key ingredient to academic success, irrespective of racial or socioeconomic influences. They stated they believed students simply either had self-motivation or they did not, and if students did not have self-motivation, they would not succeed in school, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, educational preparation, or parental influences. In conclusion, although AP students asserted early childhood encouragement and strong academic preparation in earlier grades were necessary to prepare motivated students for later academic success, those factors were not identified as related to racial and socioeconomic influences.

It's not like you're stupid, but your background matters. I had some bad teachers in junior high and didn't get the math background I needed.

I went to a school where we had very good teachers. When I came here in eighth grade, I was ahead of all the classes, and in math, the kids would ask me how to do the work because the teacher couldn't do it. Right before the test, the teacher would go over all the questions and give the answers and how to do it, and give the exact same questions on the test, word for word, so you could memorize the test.

What helped me was I went to a Department of Defense school and was a year ahead of everyone when I came to the states.

Courteous, responsible social behavior was described as the norm for AP students. Students overwhelmingly criticized non-AP students as responsible for the dirty conditions in the bathrooms, vandalism, and classroom discipline problems. This angered AP students because it limited their access to school facilities, limited their freedom of movement on and off campus, and affected how standard teachers

treated them if the AP students enrolled in standard classes. Specifically, students were not allowed to use exercise equipment without teacher supervision, some bathrooms were kept locked due to vandalism, and students were questioned about school passes. No single group of students was accused of causing property damage, but the AP students clearly excluded themselves from this category. They distanced themselves from students whose behavior they considered inappropriate. AP students also expressed resentment about being treated by standard teachers as if their behavior were suspect, and were unsparing in their criticism of irresponsible behavior.

Kids here destroy the bathrooms. It's so amazing. Some of the kids here, you'd think they were raised by wolves.

I have seen people leave their trash so the janitor can pick it up. I think that's ridiculous, to not have the basic decency to pick up after yourself.

AP kids are not the ones who go around putting out cigarettes on the toilet seats. You have to respect other people, and if you're AP and you smoke, you have to do that at home. I mean, that's not your bathroom. That's the whole school's bathroom.

AP kids end up hanging around with AP kids, and the bad kids end up hanging around with bad kids and doing drugs. My boyfriend hung around with scum. They were horrible people. But now he knows me and my friends, and lately he sees certain things that he's done in the past and is shocked that he did those things.

Here, you can't go to the bathrooms because they're locked because people who don't want to be here are tearing down the sinks or the blow driers. The first week of school three years ago everything was nice. By the second week, everything was torn down and written on because of all those people who just come to school to say they're at school. They have no respect.

There's a law that you have to stay in school to get a drivers license, that's why they're here. They're just rich kids who want to tear down the school.

The kids who do it are local, I don't think it's an ethnic thing at all. If you go into the bathrooms, you see it's the kids who live here.

I think people who live here take care of the school, and kids from all over town don't care. Kids from the standard classes do it, or remedial classes!

Sometimes you want to slap them or something. They get on your nerves, what they do. They're immature. You have to stay here six hours a day, so why tear up the school?

The vice principal yelled at me for wearing backless sandals, when there were people smoking. You couldn't even breathe, and the graffiti is all over the bathroom.

Not all intelligent people have courtesy and even rich people are rude.

People were walking down the hallway smoking pot and no one said a thing. I could smell it. There were teachers who let it go by. They didn't want to make waves.

We have violence here, fights over nothing. Rednecks are beating up someone and criticizing people. The school is diverse but the area is conservative. We have weapons checks. They took my mace.

They have guys who snuff and spit on the floor and people who throw gum on the floor.

The AP students said parental influence was needed to teach students to care about themselves and others, and to teach students self-discipline. Students who misbehaved and did poorly in school were described as having no home training while affluent students who did not achieve academically were described as spoiled.

I don't think it matters if you're rich or poor. Some kids are spoiled because their parents give them anything and they don't have to work for anything. When they go into high school, they think why work. they're not willing to put forth effort. When you haven't been handed everything and your parents tell you that's not how life is, the people in the world aren't going to hand you everything, you have to work, that's a lot of the reason why you take the AP class. You have a better chance at college and a better chance of getting a job. There's a lot of motivation when you think of it that way.

Your parents teach you motivation. I have to work for good grades, they're not going to hand them to me.

Some kids are real selfish and want just what they want. They don't see what it's going to do for them in the future. If I don't do well, it's on my shoulders. Right now, a lot of kids just want to party and live for the weekends and be with their friends. They don't see that they'll be in summer school, and end up at the junior college.

When asked to describe the ideal school, most students said Anderson High was close to the ideal. They appreciated the windows, open breezeways, large courtyard, and technological advantages such as a television in each classroom, abundance of computers, and an on-site television station. Available sports equipment included a pool, weight room, exercise room, dance room, gymnasium, tennis courts, and baseball and football fields. However, there were complaints that only "jocks" could use the equipment unless students could be supervised by teachers, which was unlikely outside of gym class. The purpose of the limitations on students' use of available equipment was to avoid vandalism, injury, and equipment damage.

Students also complained about the guidance department, which they described as "doing nothing," having "too many students for too few counselors," and "so busy you have to schedule your crisis two weeks in advance." Students were very complimentary about AP teachers, but said there were too many standard teachers who did not care about students. When asked what could improve Anderson to make it an ideal school, AP students suggested the removal of students who did not care about their education, increasing the guidance staff, and only hiring teachers who motivated students.

The ideal school is Anderson without a lot of the people. Baxter (a local prestigious private school) without all the money. Take the attitude out of Baxter, and it would be the perfect school. There, if you don't go to class, it's your problem. The rules here are wrong. They're meant for the kids who

don't have discipline. Baxter is a college prep school, and you're out of there if you don't have discipline.

At the ideal school, you could only get in if you were serious. Entrance exams and a 3.0 average would be required to get in. The other students who goof off wouldn't get admitted.

The ideal school would have qualified teachers who want to help, and are qualified. They wouldn't be here just to get their paychecks.

In the perfect school, students should be allowed to come and go as they pleased, because the ones who are forced to stay are disruptive.

There should be smaller classes, and you should take tests to get in and go to classes according to your level and graduate when you're ready to graduate.

We should get out the kids who don't want to be here. School is now a day care center for 50% of the students. They need a place to go during the day. If they don't want to be here, get them out. You'd have a society of people with tenth grade educations. Well, put them in places where they don't mind being. Put them in a skills center. If a guy wants to grow up to be a plumber like his dad, there's nothing wrong with being a plumber, cause everybody needs plumbers. But he doesn't need to take calculus here because he doesn't like it. So send him to a skills center to learn something he's going to use. That just makes sense.

Students should take a test to go to college, and only the best should go, and there should be less colleges.

The ideal school would have more punishment for these kids who are getting away with murder around this school.

I think the school would be better if teachers gave us more respect, but they can't give us more respect if the majority are acting out.

This is the perfect school if everyone would keep it clean and there weren't any violence. We're not all rich here but we're wealthier than other schools, and the kids here don't appreciate it. They think they're outside when they're in school. After the open house, my dad said "if a student can't learn here, I don't see where he can learn."

AP students described themselves as intelligent, respectful, motivated, self-disciplined, and college bound. Many of the juniors, and almost all of the

seniors interviewed had jobs and worked at least 15 hours a week, while some of the seniors worked up to 30 hours a week. Two students lived independently and worked 40 hours a week. Almost all the students belonged to organizations or participated in sports. They reported watching an average of one hour of television a day. Television was described as "boring" and brought many negative responses such as "it would give me a headache." The most frequently cited reason for not watching television was lack of time. AP students did little written homework, since most written work could be completed in class, but read frequently both for class assignments and for pleasure. Despite their busy schedules, they kept high grade point averages.

The students said their parents taught them to be ambitious. Their parents were, on the average, very involved in their academics when the students were in elementary school. The involvement lessened as the students grew older, but students said they were trusted by their parents to do what was needed in school. Although they had friends who were in standard classes, and acknowledged that not all standard students were unmotivated, AP students' identification with their AP peer group was a strong factor in keeping them motivated to achieve. They said their parents had a strong long term influence over them, but in the present, the AP peers had a stronger influence.

I was brought up going to museums and field trip with my parents. They talked to me about motivation.

Almost all of my friends plan to go to college.

It's the parents you have. I have a car and can do what I want and go where I want, but with the upbringing I had, I'm not going to go and shoot people.

The students in AP all know each other because they have been in the same class since junior high.

My mom can't help me with schoolwork, but she's proud of how much I can do.

My parents encourage me, but we're taking classes our parents took 30 years ago, so they can't do it, but they can encourage us.

My parents got scared when I made a D on a test and made me study an hour every night.

My parents have always just been there, and told me I did a good job, and if I got a bad grade, they said you'll do better next time.

It depends on the parents when you're little. In elementary school, my mother would sit down with me and ask me how was school, so I learned early to do my homework and that this was important.

If I said I wanted to take standard classes, my dad would say "you've taken honors classes in the past. I know you can do it, and I don't want you to settle for less. I don't want you to take the easy way out."

I have to take honors. That's me. I wouldn't feel right if I didn't take honors.

When asked if students in standard classes teased them, the AP students usually said they were not teased. Some said they were called "nerds," but they viewed it as a sign of jealousy from standard students. AP students closely identified with their AP peer group and academic success. A frequently heard comment was "all my friends are going to college." Being called a "nerd" was seen by some AP students as a name to be proud of.

I'm a nerd. I'm very good and I don't cause any trouble to my parents or anybody.

I'm a nerd too. I make good grades and people call me a nerd, but they're jealous. You don't get upset when people call you a nerd. You're proud. You know they're jealous.

Every time kids see a precalculus book, they don't think geek. They get respect. They know these people work hard.

Those who peaked in high school (in non-academic pursuits) can't survive in the real world, and the things that are significant and important in high school aren't real.

If a teacher knows you're an honors student, you get treated differently.

In summary, the identification AP students had with the academic success of their peer group was very strong. It outweighed any desire to be accepted or to fit in with the general school population. The AP students also had a strong awareness of how success in school in the present would effect them in the future. This awareness, derived from their parents, gave them self-motivation and perseverance to pursue academic excellence. They identified self-motivation as the main attribute which separated them from standard students.

Despite acknowledging and appreciating the benefits of their affluent socioeconomic school and home environments, AP students did not verbalize an awareness of how their enriched backgrounds gave them an academic advantage over students from less affluent backgrounds. Instead, AP students interviewed at Anderson placed more emphasis on self-motivation than on their socioeconomic status as the major factor which contributed to their academic achievement.

Furthermore, racial issues did not appear to be a part of the daily experiences of the AP students interviewed at Anderson. When asked how racial factors affected the AP program, these students said there were no effects other than the court

mandated banning of AP math and science and that racial tension was not a problem at Anderson.

Research question eight: how do AP students' academic aspirations compare at the two schools?

The students were asked to disclose their plans for after graduation plans. Every student interviewed planned to go to college, and all the twelfth-graders interviewed knew which colleges they would attend. The twelfth-graders wanted professional careers, and almost all twelfth-graders either knew what career they wanted to pursue, or had narrowed down their choices to two career fields. One student, who was going to college on a diving scholarship, did not have a clear career choice, but said she wanted to earn a master's degree. Another student, who sang in the school chorus and at local weddings, wanted to pursue a singing career and a degree in music theater or opera. Two twelfth-grade students knew they wanted to start their education in one school and transfer later to another school.

A compilation of the career choices specified were: physical therapist, dentist, medical doctor, nurse anesthetist, lobbyist, journalist, marine biologist, attorney, psychologist, teacher, aerospace engineer, chemical engineer, computer scientist, computer information systems analyst, accountant, business major, and communications major. The students were informed about whether they needed post-graduate education and had included the advanced degrees in their future plans.

Three students had part time jobs in their career choice fields. One student worked with a physical therapist, 1 worked in an advertising agency on a voluntary

basis, and I sang professionally. The AP students were unanimous in their belief that AP students automatically attended college upon graduation.

My grandfather started a medical school and has always given us bonds for our birthdays and said that's for college, so it's always been expected that I would go to college.

I always thought that college was a natural part of school after high school.

I think that's how AP students view college. It's not an option. College is something you're supposed to do.

Students' Responses to School Photographs

Students were shown 12 photographs which represented diverse parts of their schools. They were asked to describe what they thought or felt about each photograph. They were then asked to group photographs according to whether they elicited positive or negative responses. The researcher reviewed the results to discover if patterns could be found on how students viewed their school environment.

After the students grouped photographs into positive and negative categories, the researcher compiled results and found that seven pictures were overwhelmingly described in positive terms. Three pictures were overwhelmingly described in negative terms, and the remaining two pictures received an almost equal amount of positive and negative responses.

Positive responses to photographs

The following pictures received positive responses: a picture of Ms. Franklin's class in session, a picture of Dr. Carter's classroom, a picture of Dr.

Carter's class in session, the front of the school, the band room, the gymnasium, and the art patio, which was used for the display of students' art work. All of these pictures were identified with achievement, work, and competition.

Three of the above pictures were of AP classes. Ms. Franklin's AP class evoked comments about the nature of the work undertaken in the class and the student-teacher interaction. Comments included "kids doing work and concentrating," "essays, analyzing literature," "student-teacher discussions," "smart," "studious," "they're learning," "good discussions," "writing assignments and lectures," "hard work," and "work, small classes."

A picture of Dr. Carter's classroom before class evoked comments about the friendly atmosphere in the class and the students' on task behavior. Those comments included "friendly," "friendship," "teacher and students get along," "his class is better than AP last year," "attentive," "full class and well behaved," "students interested and happy," "structured, formal," "hard workers," and "attentive."

A picture of Dr. Carter's students seated at the beginning of class evoked very positive comments. The students knew they were being photographed, and they smiled and posed for the camera. Almost every comment involved the words "friendly," "fun," or "enthusiastic."

Two of the pictures in the positive category were outdoor pictures. The front of the school is centered around a courtyard with a brick tower adorned with a large black iron clock at the top. Comments about the front of the school related to its attractiveness and openness. These comments included "beautiful courtyard,"

"college-like campus," "very dynamic," "nice and open," "our bell tower," "fun to talk and get fresh air," "nice open feeling," "majestic," "what possibilities" and "finest equipment, great setting."

The other outdoor picture was of a small open courtyard referred to as the "art patio," which was used to display students' art. Some students were critical that the space was under-utilized and made comments such as "hole in the wall," "never been there," and "wasted space." However, the great majority of comments praised the surroundings, while a few of the comments praised the artwork displayed in the art patio. Comments included "beautiful artwork," "creative, empty," "beautiful, thinking space," "peaceful," "pretty," and "very sophisticated."

Two pictures in the positive category were taken inside the school and both involved the students' social life. One picture was of the band room, and one picture was of the gymnasium. The band was associated with pep rallies, football games, and music. Comments included "great during football season and pep rallies," "lively, fun, exciting," "students having fun and working at the same time," "harmonious sounds," "great music, great friends, my favorite place," "going to miss the unity," "good band program," "good times," and "neat appearance." The gymnasium was associated with sports and was described mainly in terms of its attractiveness. Comments included "glossy," "very nice," "pep rallies, fun," "athletics, competition," "roomy," and "killer gym--beautiful floors."

Negative responses to photographs

Three pictures were described in negative terms. These three pictures were of the cafeteria, a wall of students' lockers, and the guidance office. All three photographs were described in terms of crowding and inadequacy.

The cafeteria was described as dirty and comments included "dirt, grime, and dirty tables," "gum and trash," "greasy," "obnoxious, sloppy people," "gross food," "poison," "dull and drab," and "dirty and loud." Several positive comments referred to the cafeteria as a place to meet friends but also included "don't eat the food unless it's sealed," and "gets overcrowded." Only 4 students described the cafeteria in only positive terms.

Almost every student described the lockers as small. They were also described as "tiny," "dirty," "tiny and hard to reach," "grimy, dirty," and 1 student wrote "gum marks on floor." Three students never used their lockers, and only 2 students thought of friends and socializing when they saw a picture of lockers.

Only 4 students had positive comments about the guidance office. Comments included "they are lazy and unhelpful," "is anyone there?" "hard to get help," "chaos," "stressful struggling to get things accomplished," "overcrowded," "how do you get them to do something?" "desolation, bewilderment, a waste of taxpayers' money," "how much longer do I have to wait?" "unorganized," and "where's the counselor?"

Neutral category

The pictures of the library and senior patio received more positive responses than negative responses, but not enough positive responses to be placed in the positive category. The library was praised for being quiet, having many books, and being clean and organized. It was criticized for not having enough books, being under-utilized by students, and 3 students said the librarians were unfriendly. Comments included "no students around," "shut up and leave!" "not used, not much stuff in there," and "quiet, get work done."

The senior patio was praised as a senior privilege, for being sunny, and a place to meet friends. Negative comments were that it was under-utilized and resembled a jail because it was surrounded by black bars. Comments included "it's a cage, but at least it's ours," "supposed to be a privilege, but no one is using it," "sunshine at lunch," "the only senior privilege in a cage," "confinement," and "the sun!"

In summary, when shown pictures of various aspects of their school, the AP students interviewed tended to describe areas which involved the AP program, competition, school spirit, and the school facility in very positive terms. These areas included AP classrooms, the gymnasium, band room, front of the school, and art patio. Adjectives used most often to describe these areas were words such as "friendship", "fun", "open space", and "hard work." Students tended to view neutral, public space in a negative manner. The adjectives "dirty" and "small" were used frequently to describe the cafeteria and locker area. The guidance office, which

is a neutral public space in that it is open to all students equally, was viewed as inefficient, unorganized, and unable to meet the students' needs. Finally, the senior patio and the library had more positive reactions than negative, but fell into neither category. Both areas were described as under-utilized by students. The AP students interviewed had overall very favorable reactions to their school surroundings. They used positive terms for school programs and school surroundings, but were critical of dirtiness, lack of locker space, and the inaccessibility of guidance counselors.

An analysis of students' reactions to photographs lent credence to AP students' interview descriptions of perceived alienation from the general student body, and their appreciation of achievement and competition. Photographs which depicted areas of competition and achievement, such as the gymnasium or AP classes, were described favorably. Students' word choices described companionship and fun. However, photographs which depicted areas used by the general school population which did not involve competition or achievement were described negatively or were in the neutral category. These results support students' AP statements that describe themselves as separated from the general school population.

Observations in AP American History Class

The AP history classroom was spacious, new, and very clean. The walls were pale beige, the carpet was blue with beige speckles and all the furniture and equipment were new. The room was arranged with nine rows of five desks each. Four rows were on the right side of the room and five rows were on the left side.

The rows faced each other, which left a large open space in the middle of the room. A movable table and podium were in the center of the room and an overhead projector was on the table. The front door to the classroom opened in the extreme right hand corner of the classroom. When students entered the classroom, they immediately faced the sides of the four adjacent rows of desks which faced the center of the room. To the immediate left of the front door was a table which was perpendicular to the teacher's desk. The teacher's desk and the table formed an "L" shape and were situated in front of a door to a storage room. The wall behind the teacher's desk contained a map of United States, the overhead screen, and a map of Europe. At the left corner of the front wall behind the teacher's desk was a television set attached to the wall. The next wall contained two large windows with blinds and a small poster of Native Americans. There were five rows of desks in front of the windows which faced the center of the room. The third wall, which was directly opposite the teacher's desk, contained three posters depicting African-American heritage. The fourth wall, which was to the right of the front door, contained another poster depicting African-American heritage, and a bulletin board of famous African Americans. On the other side of the bulletin board were pictures of American presidents. Lighting was provided by 16 overhead lights. There were several water stains on the ceiling, but the room was otherwise in excellent condition.

During the five days of observations, the routine in the class remained the same. As students entered the class, classical music played on a tape recorder set up

by Dr. Carter. The students entered the room and talked quietly to each other until class began. Dr. Carter made brief announcements, then gave students a short review quiz in preparation for the AP exam. After the quizzes were collected, Dr. Carter reviewed the answers with the students. He then turned on the overhead projector, and using an outline he had prepared, presented his topic for the day. Students remained on task, took notes, and occasionally asked questions. The atmosphere in the room remained very quiet. About five minutes before class ended, Dr. Carter stopped lecturing, called roll, and then continued to play classical music. Students used the last few minutes in class to talk, comb their hair, complete homework, or study for other classes. During all observations, the researcher sat at the second to last desk in the first row of desks. From this point, all activities in the room were easily observable.

During the first observation, classical music played on a tape recorder as the students entered the room and sat in their seats. After morning announcements and the AP review quiz, Dr. Carter lectured on the Progressive Era and muckrakers and asked students three content questions. Several students to the right of the observer whispered and giggled off and on throughout class, but did so quietly and did not disturb the class. Throughout the period, all students either took notes or listened to the teacher with their notebooks open. At one point, two different groups of students on the left side of the room whispered questions to each other. Dr. Carter turned to them and said "are you having a problem over here?" The students became instantly quiet, and Dr. Carter continued his lecture. He emphasized main points with

comments such as "what I want you to understand is..." and "please note these names." When the lecture ended, Dr. Carter took roll and played classical music on the recorder.

During the second observation, Dr. Carter discussed reforms during the Progressive Era. The pace of the class was fast, and students remained quiet, on task, and took notes. Dr. Carter emphasized important points with comments such as "take note of that," and "please remember areas where Progressives made reforms: political, social, and economic." When he asked a question about opposition to workers' compensation, he prodded a student to expand his answer by asking "why?" and "how?" When the student could not answer further, the teacher explained "it goes against their view of limited government involvement." The teacher then prodded the student with "what is the government's role?" and the student answered "to serve and protect." There were few questions and answers because the class presentation was through lecture. The students remained quiet throughout the class period. One person was observed chewing gum and a few students on the right side of the room whispered off and on during the class, but did not cause a disruption in the class. One person was observed to have his head down during the last five minutes of the lecture.

The third observation revealed the same classroom atmosphere and procedures as the first two observations. Students entered the room while classical music played on the tape recorder and they were instantly compliant when told it was time to take the quiz. Dr. Carter discussed the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. One student

had his head down for several minutes. The class was fast paced as the teacher delivered many details about the topic and spoke in a quiet, even-paced voice throughout the class period.

During the fourth observation, the procedure was the same as during the first three observations. However, the students seemed a little active and talkative, although they settled down quickly once the lecture started. While Dr. Carter discussed the Taft Administration, the room was totally silent. When Dr. Carter talked about President Taft's weight, a student asked "why does a President have to be physically fit?" Dr. Carter explained the job of president was physically demanding. The student persisted twice to try to get more of an answer, and a peer silenced him with "shut up, Chris." One student asked for spelling clarification, and another student asked "why did Taft agree to run again?" Other than those two questions, the students were quietly taking notes. The same few students to the right of the observer, who had whispered to each other during previous observations, whispered occasionally during class. Dr. Clark asked students to think about the effect of the breakup of the Republican party during the Taft Administration and to compare it to the effect of Ross Perot on the last presidential election.

The fifth observation was on a Friday, and again the students seemed a little restless. After the AP review quiz, Dr. Carter reviewed the answers with students, and then excused several seniors for a special senior activity. Some students asked Dr. Carter for permission to study for a test in another class during the AP history class. Dr. Carter said there might be time at the end of class, and then he began his

lecture on the Wilson administration. All students were immediately quiet once Dr. Carter began speaking. He took time from the prepared lecture to talk about how a president can be elected despite lacking a majority of the popular vote. He then talked about British Parliament and explained how the Prime Minister is elected. The tone in the room never became loud, although three times students were reminded to be quiet. When class ended nine minutes early, students who had a test in another class began to study and several seniors left early for a senior activity.

In summary, based on five observations, the AP history class at Anderson was very organized and followed a repetitive daily pattern. Student interviews confirmed that Dr. Carter presented most of the class material through lectures and the use of transparencies on the overhead projector, although an occasional video was used. Students were attentive and quiet during class, and took notes the duration of the lecture. The few students who spoke off task either did so very quietly or were instantly silenced by a reprimand from the teacher. The course content closely followed AP guidelines to prepare students to pass the AP examination at the end of the year.

Observations in AP English Class

During the observations, the researcher sat at the teacher's desk located at the back right hand corner of the room. From this location, the entire room was visible to the researcher. The front door was located on the left hand corner of the room and five rows of desks along the left wall faced the center of the room. The first row had

two desks and the remaining four rows had three desks in each row. On the opposite side of the room along the right wall, five rows of desks faced the center of the room. The first row towards the front of the room contained only one desk. The next two rows contained three desks each. The fourth row contained four desks, and the fifth row contained three desks. Towards the front of the room, in between both sets of desks, was a podium. Immediately to the left of the front door was the American flag mounted on the wall. Next to the flag was a bulletin board and directly adjacent to the bulletin board was a blackboard, which occupied most of the wall space. In the left hand corner of the room, angled across the corner of the room, was a bookcase. Along the back wall, about midway down the length of the wall, was a table with five chairs. In the right hand corner of the room, angled across the corners, was the teacher's desk where the researcher sat. A file cabinet was in the back right hand corner behind the teacher's desk. Along the right hand wall were high windows which occupied most of the wall. Along the front wall was a large blackboard and above the blackboard was a screen.

During the time the researcher observed five AP English classes, the students were preparing for the AP examination. Everyday, the students read passages, wrote essays, verbally presented their essays, or discussed individual and group assignments. All assignments were based on questions from previous AP English examinations. There was much teacher and students interaction during the presentations and discussions, and the classroom atmosphere was busy yet relaxed. During the first day of observation, the desks were arranged into four groups, with 5

to 6 students assigned to each group. The students came into class, engaged in conversations, or joking and laughing. As the class started, the students sat in their groups and completed the previous day's assignment on a passage called The Rattler. The students were talkative and appeared busy. When a group of students completed their assignment, they engaged in conversation. When all the groups were finished, a representative from each group came to the podium and discussed three thesis statements from The Rattler. Each presenter told the class which thesis statement he or she thought was best, second best, and weakest, and gave reasons for each selection. The teacher, Ms. Franklin, asked questions about how and why the students made their choices. When all the groups completed their presentations, the students reorganized the desks into rows, and left for their next class.

During the second observation, the students entered the class and talked to each other. Two students had a conversation about volunteer work, and 3 students discussed college, scholarships, and college majors. The teacher congratulated a student for winning a scholarship. Ms. Franklin then stood at a back table and gave students candy they had purchased for a senior scholarship fund raising activity. Other students sat and talked quietly, and 2 students stood by the front door and talked. Ms. Franklin then said "everyone should have their paper in front of them." Within two minutes, a student was in front of the room giving a presentation on The Rattler. The teacher asked questions such as "what does a live wire connote?" "what creates sympathy for man?" "why is that distinction important, that the snake and its song are not ugly?" Ms. Franklin persisted in asking questions until the student

could not develop the answer further. A second presenter discussed a passage which compared two funerals. The teacher asked the student questions about the author's word choices and imagery, and she asked the student to differentiate between the attitudes in the two passages by how the speaker in each passage described the deceased. The students remained attentive and quiet, but one student kept her head down all period.

During the third observation, students again entered the room while having conversations but they settled down as soon as Ms. Franklin began class. During this observation, students continued analyzing the passages which described two funerals. Ms. Franklin asked the presenter to look for clues which disclosed the social class of the speaker and then delved into the student's answer by asking how the speaker felt and why and what made the speaker suppress his desires. At the conclusion of the presentation, Ms. Franklin told students to take out a sheet of paper and arrange themselves in groups of three. The students complied quickly and Ms. Franklin handed out a passage on the place of a television in society. Students were told to write an essay on whether television should reflect the real world more than it does. The groups promptly began working on their assignment. They talked quietly, and sometimes animatedly, while Ms. Franklin circulated through the room. She made statements to the groups, such as "you need to go to the other issues he talks about" and then she explained what she meant by her instruction. Ms. Franklin checked the progress of all the groups and read their thesis statements. Towards the end of class, she said "I want to hear the positions you've taken as groups. I want to hear your

thesis statements." The students were still talking, so Ms. Franklin said "sh!" and the room was instantly quiet. After each of the seven groups read their thesis statements, the bell rang and class was dismissed.

During the fourth observation, Ms. Franklin entered the room after all the students had entered. She told the students to take out three sheets of paper and a pen. When some talking continued, two students said "sh!" The teacher began to talk about the assignment, and the class was totally silent. She then introduced 10 AP test preparation questions to the class which related to how to answer the AP exam essay questions. Ms. Franklin distributed an assignment and told students to write a thesis statement and at least five supporting details. A student talked to a peer, and the teacher said "excuse me, what are you doing?" The student mumbled an answer, and Ms. Franklin said "well, I'm talking right now." The student then became quiet while the rest of the class began to write their assignments. When the teacher left the room to get a copy of the attendance roll for the researcher, the room was totally silent as students continued their assignments. When students completed their work, they stood up, went to a table at the back of the room, and stapled their essays to the back of their question sheets, and then silently sat down again. During the last five minutes of class, students began whispering to each other. When the bell rang, Ms. Franklin reminded the students that the AP exam was next Wednesday.

During the fifth observation, students came into the room talking and laughing. The teacher called the class to attention, and the room became silent. Ms. Franklin then gave students a quiz on the AP test preparation methods she had reviewed the

previous day. After the quizzes were collected, Ms. Franklin asked students to verbally answer the quiz questions. She elaborated on students' answers to ensure correct comprehension. After the review of the quiz, Ms. Franklin handed out AP packets, and turned on the overhead projector so students could follow her instructions on how to fill out the cover sheet of the packet. Students remained attentive during her instructions and by the time the packet was filled out, the bell rang and class was over.

In summary, the researcher concluded that Ms. Franklin used a very organized approach to teaching the curriculum, but varied her assignments frequently. Students were assigned individual and group work, class presentations, and in-depth discussions on a wide variety of reading material. Ms. Franklin focused on preparing her students for the AP exam through the development of critical thinking and college-level writing skills.

After observing five class periods in both AP classes, the researcher concluded that Ms. Franklin and Dr. Carter were similar in their basic approach to teaching the AP curriculum because both teachers were very structured in their presentation of the AP curriculum and focused their curriculum on preparing students for the AP examination. They both also expected their students to learn a large amount of material, to be respectful and attentive when the teacher spoke, and to listen carefully to instructions. The students were quick to use peer pressure to silence talkative or disruptive peers. Despite the academic pressure to do well and the high level of organization, the atmosphere in both classrooms was relaxed and friendly. There was

occasional joking back and forth between students and teachers, yet students remained on task and complied instantly with teachers' requests.

Teachers' Interviews

AP Teachers' Interviews

Teachers were interviewed to answer the following research questions.

Question 1: What are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?

Question 4: How do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?

Question 5: How do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?

Both AP teachers had extensive teaching experience. Dr. Carter had taught history for 27 years and had a bachelor's degree in history, a master's degree in history, and a doctorate in education and history. Dr. Carter had been a teacher in higher education for 14 years, and an academic dean for 7 years. The current school year (1992-1993) was his second year as a public school teacher and his first year as an AP teacher. He was assigned to teach AP history the first week of school, when the regular AP teacher resigned.

Ms. Franklin has been a public school teacher for 22 years and had a bachelor's degree in English education and a master's degree in English. The current

school year was her third year teaching AP English. Ms. Franklin said she came to Anderson High School specifically to teach AP English after teaching honors English for 12 years at another school, which did not have an AP teaching vacancy. When Anderson opened, she applied for the AP English teacher position.

Research question one: what are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?

In order to be admitted to an AP class, both teachers said students must be recommended by their previous honors teacher. For admission into AP history, the students must have taken honors world history. For admission into AP English, students must have previously taken eleventh-grade honors English. Students were also expected to have at least a B average in their previous honors course and scored at least 75 percentile on the PSAT. Students who did not meet the criteria for admission to AP could still take the AP course if they obtained a waiver from the guidance department.

Ms. Franklin: One student did not score at the 75 percentile on the verbal part of the PSAT. His parents signed a waiver. He scored around the 55 percentile, and he is struggling. It's not just the writing, but the reading as well. He hasn't been in honors, either, so he has a whole different background of preparation from the other kids. But he has worked very, very hard and he is coming along. I don't know if he will pass the AP exam, but I think he is better prepared for college now.

Dr. Carter: The first nine weeks I started out with over 120 kids and ended up with less than 90. Some registered for AP who shouldn't have registered. That was a rough beginning because when they dropped out, I also lost some kids I shouldn't have lost. They should have stayed with it, but they got a little scared seeing other drop out. A lot of those that did drop out were those that came in with waivers, so a lot of those who dropped out came in without the recommendation of the teacher.

Both teachers said students who took AP courses with waivers often had difficulty keeping up with the course work. In conclusion, the selectivity of AP courses and the difficulty lower ability students had in AP courses served to maintain the elitism of the AP program. Only the highest ability students did well in AP, and of those, only about 70 percent passed the exam.

Research question four: how do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?

Both teachers said they began teaching AP without clear expectations. Dr. Carter did not seek the position, and Ms. Franklin recruited her first AP class.

Dr. Carter: I can honestly say I had no expectations because I never taught this course before other than at the college level.

Ms. Franklin: I had no expectations the first year because I had to recruit the class. We split from Woodridge (another school) so those kids had a choice to stay at Woodridge and graduate, or come here, even if they lived in the Woodridge district. So the better students tended to stay at Woodridge and the first AP class we had here wasn't so good. In fact, half of the senior class had a cumulative grade point average of under 2.0. I got test scores together and got a group and I started out with 16 and ended up with 13. They had never been in honors English before, but were pretty close to 75 percentile on the PSAT verbal portion, so we went through the class, and they were wonderful. They did well. Sixty-nine percent of them passed the AP exam, and 70 percent is the national average.

Both teachers said they taught AP courses as college courses and expressed high regard for the students' motivation and ability to successfully complete the course. When asked to compare AP students to standard curriculum students, the AP teachers said AP students had greater ability, motivation, and respect for the teacher.

Dr. Carter: The students are bright, motivated, respectful. They're just good kids. I really enjoyed my year with them. I didn't have any problems at all. I'm blessed in that regard. There is all the difference in the world between these kids and the kids I taught last year. No discipline problems or anything like that. There's all the difference in the world in terms of their ability and motivation. Standard students are not as attentive and they haven't experience taking notes.

Ms. Franklin: Compared to the other students in the school, AP students are above their ability level. Two thirds are well qualified to be in the class. The other third are very hard working, super achiever type kids. The AP kids are better readers, better writers, more mature, more effective, more motivated, better thinkers. They know exactly where they are going. It all has to do with intellectual maturity. The standard kids give up very easily. When they read a piece of literature that has a lot of big words or difficult syntax, they just throw their hands and say, "Ms. Franklin, we can't understand this!" You have to really slow down and go step by step and work through things with them while the AP kids digest the stuff independently and then turn it back together and then everybody discusses the conclusions they came to. It's just like a college class.

Both teachers said they taught and graded AP students as college students.

They taught the specified AP objectives and gave tests and exam preparation exercises provided in the AP curriculum. Both teachers stated their primary goal was to focus their curriculum on preparing students to pass the AP examination. Both teachers also said teaching AP was rewarding because of the high ability and motivation of the students, yet the preparation was much more time consuming than teaching standard courses. In order to develop their skills as AP teachers, both teachers attended workshops. Dr. Carter signed up for a workshop offered during the summer and paid the \$425 fee from his own resources because he would not be reimbursed from school funds. Ms. Franklin attended workshops sponsored by the Educational Testing Service, which are conducted on teachers' planning days during the school year.

Dr. Carter: I've worked harder this year than any other year I've ever worked in my life in terms of teaching. It takes a great deal more work. It's a lot different than just teaching college kids where you're just concerned about covering the material in a time span. Here, you're not only concerned about covering the content but you're preparing them for the examination as well, and it's difficult. It's not the content that worries me but the structure in making sure I cover everything that I need to cover for the exam. I have to make sure I cover everything I think the exam is going to cover.

Ms. Franklin: There's a lot of extra work, planning, and organizing. The reading material is more difficult and the skills level is more difficult. They write more, and their papers are longer. I teach two AP classes with a total of 57 students. It takes me at least 10 minutes to read a paper, plus it takes a lot of concentration. I prefer to read them in a lump. I don't like to read a few here and there because I grade them on a holistic basis. If I don't sit down and gut it out, then I won't be effective. They won't be graded with the same eye, so I prefer to just have a block of time. I put it off and do it at home at night or on the weekend.

The focus on the AP exam affected how the teachers organized and taught the curriculum. Dr. Carter received an AP curriculum guide that contained an outline of what should be taught during the year. Consequently, he was very detail oriented in his presentation of the material, and relied heavily on lectures and note taking, with minimum classroom discussion. Ms. Franklin, on the other hand, said students' reading skills in the past have pulled down their scores on the AP exam, while they were strong in writing skills. Consequently, she focused on reading passages. Ms. Franklin estimated that a third of her students would not be able to pass the AP exam because of their weakness in reading and passage interpretation.

In order to help students develop their ability to read critically, Ms. Franklin assigned students eight writing assignments, three of which were group efforts. The assignments were to read selected passages and answer questions which required careful analysis of the passages. The assignments were followed by peer evaluations

during which students read and critiqued each other's work. The teacher also conducted class discussions on the author's purpose and how she or he developed his or her purpose, word choice, imagery, and orientation. She also helped students develop test taking strategies on how to attack a passage and think through answers related to the passage.

Although both Ms. Franklin and Dr. Carter said they focused their curriculum on preparing students to pass the AP exam, they also focused on encouraging students. Dr. Carter wore a suit and tie every day to promote a professional atmosphere and Ms. Franklin described herself as "the cheerleader." Both teachers said teaching AP was very rewarding and enjoyable. Dr. Carter stated the most rewarding part of his job was seeing students mature and grow and rise to the challenge of AP work while Ms. Franklin said just being able to work with AP students was rewarding.

Both teachers claimed the only disappointing part of their jobs was their own limitations. Dr. Carter would have liked to have paced himself better in presenting the curriculum because the large volume of material that had to be covered was difficult for students to learn. Next year, he planned to review the material with students every nine weeks instead of only at the end of the year. Ms. Franklin said sometimes she felt as if she did not teach as well as she could have. Neither teacher described anything as disappointing about AP students or about teaching AP and both teachers said they believed their students were better prepared for college level work because of their participation in AP classes.

The teachers said teaching AP did not affect their relationships with other teachers. Ms. Franklin said sometimes standard teachers did not appreciate the amount of time and effort involved in teaching, preparing, and grading work. Both teachers reported some friction between AP and standard students. Ms. Franklin said the AP students were viewed as "workaholics or fanatics."

When asked if they thought the racial and socioeconomic composition of Anderson High School affected the AP program, both teachers identified parental involvement and encouragement as a major component of a higher socioeconomic environment. Although Dr. Carter said there were bright students in less privileged backgrounds, the level of parental education was important in motivating students to take honors and AP courses. "Any lack of encouragement from the home would obviously have to make a difference at this point," he said. Ms. Franklin included the overall lifestyle of people in higher socioeconomic brackets as having an impact on academic success.

Ms. Franklin: They have experiences and travel. Just life experiences make them more receptive to the work ethic so they would rather be in an AP class and achieve.

Research question five: how do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?

All students at Anderson were required to take the AP exam, and both teachers used specific AP test preparation methods. Dr. Carter used an AP review book provided by the College Board and assigned students 20 to 30 pages from the review book to read each night for 14 consecutive nights. Students were quizzed each day on

the previous night's reading assignment. After collecting the quizzes, Dr. Carter discussed the answers with the students and gave daily review lectures for four weeks before the AP exam. Review sessions were held after school on three separate occasions to discuss history from the Vietnam War to the present. Ms. Franklin prepared students for the AP exam by giving students timed writing assignments from previous AP exams. After students completed the assignments, their answers were discussed in detail the following day. Ms. Franklin also taught test taking strategies on how to analyze a passage.

Standard Curriculum Teachers' Interviews

The standard curriculum teachers were asked to describe their teaching roles, curriculum focus, students, and to compare standard classes to AP classes. They were also asked to identify qualities needed to be an AP teacher, factors which could be changed in the AP program, and what they perceived to be the effects of racial and socioeconomic factors on the AP program. The purpose of the interviews was to find out how standard teachers described the AP program.

The standard history teacher, Mr. Bishop, had taught social studies in junior high school for 2 years and history in high school for 10 years. Mr. Bishop said his goal as a standard history teacher was to view students as capable of achieving high goals and to give students an education that would facilitate their freshman year of college. The standard English teacher, Ms. Foster, had taught standard English for six years. She said her role in the classroom was to give students a point of reference

they could use to deal with the world and tie the past with the present. Both teachers said the role of the AP teacher was to present a more detailed, more intense curriculum than standard classes, and to prepare the AP students for college.

Mr. Bishop: There is certain material that I don't cover that an AP class would, but I still look at it as if all these kids want to go to college, although I know they don't.

Ms. Foster: I focus on reading, appreciating, and understanding literature. I cover the same kind of material that an AP teacher does, but I don't do it in the same depth or to the extent that an AP teacher does, and I don't give the same volume of work.

The standard teachers said their students lacked motivation and ability to achieve at higher levels. Mr. Bishop described his students as "not self-starters" with unrealistic appraisals of what was needed to do well in school. "They won't study like an AP kid will, yet they become depressed if they make a bad grade," he said.

Mr. Bishop: Practically every person in a standard class will say they're going to college, but they don't put together in their minds that their performance in class is tied in with going to college. They can get an F in my course and bad grades in other courses, and they still tell you they're going to college. It just doesn't register for them.

Ms. Foster attributed poor writing skills to low achievement in English. A student load of 150 students made her unable to assign frequent writing assignments.

Ms. Foster: All we can do is offer four writing assignments per nine weeks, which is one every other week. If it's not graded quickly, the students don't get the full feedback. In AP classes, the students write once a week, and they write long essays. I could never grade the AP paper load.

Ms. Foster said some of her students came from AP classes because they could no longer handle the pressure of being in an AP class. Mr. Bishop viewed students who dropped out of AP in a different manner.

Ms. Foster: They seem to be relieved that they don't have to work as hard in my class to keep up. They are able to slide through. They are better writers. It comes naturally to them. They understand what they read to a greater degree. They came in because they couldn't take the pressure anymore. They were making Cs and Ds. Sometimes it's just too much for them. They have too much going on in their lives. They're taking several honors courses, and their level of achievement, the pressure, is tremendous.

Mr. Bishop: They dropped out of AP because they were not motivated to start with, and wanted an easy ride. If I quit coaching, I'd rather teach AP because it's so much more fun. The AP students ask questions you can discuss. They're starved for knowledge. They ask questions related to other areas. That's fun for me, just talking. You can't do that with standard kids. They won't ask questions because they haven't prepared. They haven't read the material enough to understand it or ask questions. Some people just have personal pride. They set a standard for themselves and it bothers them not to achieve up to that standard so they work hard, and other people have to be cajoled.

Both teachers agreed that students who dropped out of AP classes did not work up to their capacity in standard classes. The addition of AP dropouts in the classroom added to the problem of teaching students with a wide range of abilities within the same classroom.

Ms. Foster: I have to drag along Johnny from special education.

Mr. Bishop: I have someone reading at 80 percentile and 10 percentile in the same room. How can I effectively teach the same material to one student who reads at the fourth-grade level and one who reads at the tenth-grade level?

Ms. Foster only recommended one standard student for AP English, and that student did not succeed. Mr. Bishop did not view his students as capable of doing AP work because of their poor reading and writing skills. "They don't write. They

plagiarize. Their punctuation, spelling, and grammar are awful." Both teachers described AP in very positive terms. Ms. Foster said the schools should try to get only the best English teachers to teach AP, and AP teachers should have additional planning time. Mr. Bishop taught AP for two years, but quit when he started coaching. He also stated AP teachers should have more planning time and should, like the AP students, have a natural curiosity about the world, enjoy learning, and encourage free discussion. Neither thought the AP teachers should have higher pay than standard teachers.

When asked what they would change about AP, Ms. Foster said there should be an intermediate step between honors and AP so that students who were afraid of failure in AP could try out their skills rather than take AP and fail. Mr. Bishop thought AP admission should be stricter.

Mr. Bishop: It has to be more stringent. We're letting a lot of kids in AP who don't belong there. They get in because they get waived in by their parents. That's the trend. The parents think they know more than the teachers. What happened to that cohesive partnership between the parent and the teacher where they both pushed the child to excel?

Both teachers said the AP students were insulated from the rest of the student body because they had most of their classes together and wanted to be with peers who had common academic goals. The AP teachers were also viewed as slightly insulated from the faculty. Mr. Bishop attributed AP teachers' isolation to their constant contact with motivated students, and Ms. Foster attributed it to the esteem they received from other teachers. Neither wanted to teach AP because of the demands on their personal time.

When asked if they thought the racial and socioeconomic composition of Anderson High School affected the AP program, both teachers stated it did, but they saw the effect from different perspectives. Mr. Bishop stated affluence made the standard students spoiled, careless with the school environment, and unrealistic about the difficulties of working and acquiring material possessions. Ms. Foster said affluent backgrounds gave AP students the advantage of having parents who lived intellectually enriched lifestyles. Both teachers said AP students had self-motivation, which set them apart from standard students, and their self-motivation was developed by parental involvement.

Mr. Bishop: It's terrible when the teachers' parking lot looks like a used car lot and the students' parking lot looks like a new car lot. A girl was telling me the other day that her father just bought her a brand new 240 Nissan SX. I asked her why, and she said because she was feeling so bad about breaking up with her boyfriend. They're pampered and spoiled. This school looks a lot older than three years old because the kids destroy it. They think someone else will come along and fix it. They don't realize what their parents have had to put into it to be where they are. We were talking about salaries one day, and I asked them where they were going to start in the salary range. They all thought they would start in the \$45 and \$50 thousand scale, and you couldn't tell them differently because their parents make those salaries. They don't see that their parents worked extremely hard to make that money. They think, well, that's my lifestyle.

Ms. Foster: I think our AP program is stronger than other poorer schools because of the kind of student body we have. The kids here are sharp. They've had a lot of stimulus. Their parents are professionals, so the students have had more stimulus from the moment they're born. The parents talk about things they've seen or read, or make literary allusions to things. Their home life motivates them. Their parents role model it and expect it and live it. The parents read the newspaper. They're informed. They have conversations with their friends and neighbors. It's a part of their lives. When they get up in the morning, mom is reading the newspaper and she's paying attention to what is going on in the news. She doesn't necessarily watch game shows. The kids don't even know they're getting it.

Mr. Bishop: Look at open house figures. Look at AP attendance rates against those of standard classes. I may have 4 or 5 parents out of 30. Go to the AP classroom, and there is almost 100% attendance. They fill up the room. Parents are standing up everywhere, whereas I could fit parents in this conference room.

In conclusion, the results of interviews with two standard curriculum teachers demonstrated that the teachers perceived AP students and AP teachers as separated from the general school population. This sense of separateness extended to the standard teachers' descriptions of AP students' parents, whom they described as more involved with their children and living more enriched lifestyles than parents of standard students. The standard teachers also perceived the AP curriculum as so much more rigorous than the standard curriculum that Ms. Foster suggested the establishment of an intermediate class between honors and AP. Mr. Bishop believed the rigor of AP effectively separated students who were serious about education from standard students, whom he described as wanting high grades for little effort. This was also his explanation for why some AP students dropped out of AP into standard classes. Ms. Foster thought AP students dropped out due to excessive academic pressure, and once in standard classes, they lowered their level of motivation. Although the two teachers expressed different opinions about why AP students dropped out of the program, both teachers described AP as a rigorous program which separated highly motivated, high achieving students from the general school population, who were described as low in both ability and motivation.

Vice Principal's Interview

Mr. Atkinson, the vice principal of Anderson High School, was interviewed to find out how he described the purpose of the AP program at Anderson High School. He was also asked to define admission criteria to the AP program, AP teacher selection methods, and what he perceived to be the effects of racial and socioeconomic factors on the AP program at Anderson.

Mr. Atkinson stated the purpose of the AP program was to challenge intellectually bright students so they would be successful, and not bored, and to prepare them for college. Criteria for admission into AP included a score at 90 percentile or above on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) or 75 percentile on the PSAT. Students also needed teachers' recommendations from honors classes taken the previous year. Students who did not meet the criteria for admission to AP classes could be admitted if their parents requested a waiver of admission criteria. However, Mr. Atkinson said waivers were rare because students in AP accepted a strenuous academic workload.

AP teachers were required to have a master's degree in the subject area they wished to teach because often AP teachers also taught dual enrollment courses in conjunction with the local junior college. The junior college required dual enrollment teachers to have a master's degree so students could earn college credit. Mr. Atkinson explained that students often preferred AP courses to dual enrollment, even though AP course required a rigorous examination at the end of the year. This was

because AP course grades were weighted, which resulted in higher overall GPAs.

Dual enrollment courses did not offer the advantage of weighted grades.

In order to comply with a court ruling that Anderson could not open three years ago unless it met desegregation mandates, Anderson became an International Studies magnet school. The purpose of the magnet program was to attract minority students. Anderson was also not allowed to offer AP math and science classes so that students would have to go to a school with a predominantly African-American student population to take those courses.

Mr. Atkinson: We're dealing with other cultures, the South American and African-American cultures. We target those things to bring students of the minority race to our school. That way we can integrate the school. That was our intent--to have the magnet program so we could draw in other students. African-American studies was our draw when we opened up. It's also a dual enrollment class.

Mr. Atkinson said he viewed the magnet program as successful. However, he did not believe the ban on teaching AP math and science changed the racial composition of the school. Students who wanted those courses transferred to Woodridge, a nearby, predominantly white magnet high school in business, or went to the magnet college preparatory high school.

Mr. Atkinson: Some go to Woodridge instead of getting bused. They probably said they wanted to go to the magnet program in business at Woodridge, and enrolled in AP math and science instead. Besides, we're trying to get away from massive busing.

There was not much competition for the position of AP teacher because of the extra workload. Those who taught AP were able to attend workshops during teachers' planning days as well as on their own time during the summer. Mr.

Atkinson said he believed the greatest benefit of AP classes was the challenge the students received, while the greatest drawback was the anxiety of the AP exam.

Mr. Atkinson: Students must make a 3, 4, or 5 on the test for the school to receive funding. There is anxiety on the part of the teachers too, because those tests have to be paid for and the AP classes are not generating the funds to pay for these tests. The money has to come out of a different fund. I think the teachers are aware of this, and the kids are, too. When a kid passes the test, there is a reimbursement. If a kid gets a 3, there is a certain amount, if he gets a 4, there is a certain amount, and if he gets a 5, there is a greater amount, and this money pays for the next set of kids.

Mr. Atkinson attributed the self-motivation of AP students to parental influence, which he said was instilled in them in early childhood. "We get the benefits of what the parents have done. A lot of the push is already there." Parental involvement lessened as AP students grew and matured and were able to take greater responsibility for their actions. When asked if he thought affluence affected academic achievement at Anderson, Mr. Atkinson said parents of lower socioeconomic environments had less time to spend with their children, and therefore motivated them less. Also, living in an affluent environment made many students materialistic, with the result that they placed more value on their jobs than on academic achievement. However, he stated the AP students were able to work and still achieve academically because they realized the importance of their education.

Mr. Atkinson: At Anderson, we have kids who work, but they don't have to work. They work for creature comforts. They want cars, outrageous cars, and they want money in their pockets and more clothes and they are more materialistic. It's not as if they have to work. Their parents can adequately provide for them. It's that they choose to work, and sometimes, in my opinion, it adversely affects what they do in class because they place more value on their jobs than on what they do in class. They don't see the connection that they need their education to get a better job to be able to buy better things. But the AP kids see the connection. Most of them are on task.

Guidance Counselors' Interviews

Two guidance counselors, Mr. Schwartz and Ms. Saylor, were interviewed to find out how they described the role of the AP program at Anderson High School and how the socioeconomic and racial composition of the school affected the AP program. Both counselors said AP was open to juniors and seniors who had grades of A or B in the previous honors course in that subject, had test scores at 90 percentile in the PSAT, and had their teacher's recommendation from the previous year's honors course. One counselor, Mr. Schwartz, said teachers' recommendations received the greatest weight of all AP admission criteria. However, criteria were set by the individual departments and varied from school to school, with no county wide guidelines on AP admission. Students who did not meet the criteria for admission had the option to waiver into the AP course.

Mr. Schwartz: We have 10% to 15% of students who waiver into AP. Generally those are the students who have more difficulty in the AP courses.

Students who enrolled in AP courses were generally in honors classes since ninth grade. They enrolled in AP courses, according to Ms. Saylor, because they were bright students who wanted to receive college credit. She described AP students as high achievers who fit in well with the rest of the student body and were involved in many activities besides AP classes.

Ms. Saylor: AP is an excellent opportunity for higher functioning students. These students blend in because they are involved with so many other things. Usually AP students can do well academically and be club members, active in sports, and in Honor Society. They can handle many things.

The counselors explained that AP differed from dual enrollment because AP was managed by the College Board with a test at the end of the year, whereas dual enrollment was managed by the local junior college and college credit was dependent upon students doing well in the class during the entire year. Ms. Saylor identified the weight placed on the AP exam as the one drawback to AP. "In AP, college credit depends on just one test," she said. Criteria for admission to dual enrollment are the same as criteria for admission to AP at Anderson High School.

The individual departments selected teachers for AP positions and sought the more qualified and experienced teachers. Teachers were asked to teach AP and teachers also volunteered. Due to budget constraints, AP teachers were limited in the amount of AP workshops they attended, could not leave work during the week to attend workshops, and were rarely reimbursed for workshops they paid for themselves.

The counselors viewed their role in the AP program as one of advising students on which courses to take, providing information on college selection and scholarships, and administering the AP examination at the end of the year. "Our role is to communicate," Mr. Schwartz said. Both counselors attributed AP students' success to how their parents trained them when they were younger and to the benefits inherent in a higher socioeconomic environment.

Mr. Schwartz: What makes them high functioning? Parental background, socioeconomic background, early childhood education, reading that first 10 years, encouragement at home. They are intelligent people who have been motivated.

Ms. Saylor: Socioeconomic factors affect the AP program in that AP students are better prepared when they enter school to do well and not worry about other things. They know their parents are making a good salary. They know the bills are going to be paid. They're going to have the opportunity to go on field trips. They don't have to worry about whether they have money for grad night or for senior pictures. They can concentrate on academics or other social activities.

The school was limited in the AP courses it could offer due to legal action taken by the NAACP. Currently, Anderson offered AP classes in English, European history, psychology, American history, American government, political and comparative systems, Latin, Spanish, and French. The International Studies Program was created to encourage a more equal racial balance by drawing in minority students. Mr. Schwartz said the International Studies program resulted in Anderson having a better racial balance than other schools in the nearby vicinity.

In conclusion, both counselors described the AP program as beneficial to bright students by preparing them for college and giving them the opportunity to receive college credit. Admission criteria were high, with a strong reliance on teachers' recommendations, but criteria varied among the departments. AP teachers with experience and high qualifications were sought to teach AP, but training opportunities were limited by budgetary constraints. The guidance counselors said racial factors affected the AP program by the court ordered prohibition of teaching AP math and science and in the creation of the magnet International Studies Program. As a result of the court ruling, one counselor said Anderson had a more equitable racial balance than other high schools in the vicinity. Socioeconomic factors affected the AP program by providing AP students with enriched backgrounds, learning

opportunities, parental encouragement and freedom from financial stress. Finally, they described the role of the guidance counselor in the AP program as a communicator to the students, parents, and school.

Baker High School

Baker High School is located in a low income area of a large southeastern city with a large African-American population. The same methodology used at Anderson was also used at Baker to collect information about Baker's AP program. Students were interviewed from an AP American history class and an AP English class. The researcher used the same interview guide that was used at Anderson. All but 4 of the 30 AP history students were interviewed, and all 16 of the AP English students were interviewed. Four AP history students declined the researcher's request for interviews. They gave no reasons for declining, but stated they did not want to be interviewed.

The researcher also observed 5 class sessions in each of the 2 AP classes for a total of 10 hours of observations at Baker. The purpose of the observations was to verify the accuracy of information obtained from interviews.

Students were also shown 12 photographs of various parts of their school and asked to describe their reactions to the photographs. Students were then asked to label each picture as evoking a positive or negative response. The researcher then analyzed responses to obtain patterns and descriptions of how AP students at Baker described their school environment.

Students' Interviews

Research question one: what are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?

Students were asked how they were admitted to AP classes. Most of the students had been in honors since middle school or ninth grade and considered AP to be the next logical step in course selection.

They take you from your honors class. You're in honors from ninth grade up.

You get a choice. They'll ask you if you want to take AP next year, and the teacher recommends you. You definitely need the teacher's recommendation. When I was in sixth grade, they put me in honors, and my parents told me to stay in AP classes.

You needed to have an A or B average in tenth grade.

Five of the students interviewed had not been in honors, but were recommended for AP classes by their teachers, and 1 student requested the chance to take an AP class. The primary method of admission to an AP class was through teacher recommendation based on continued enrollment in honors classes with at least a B average. The main reason cited for taking AP classes was to get college credit. Before entering AP, most students expected the classes to be challenging and difficult.

I expected harder work with more critical thinking.

I expected the college experience, doing college work, assignments, and papers.

I was afraid of taking AP. I thought it would be very hard.

Research question three: how do students in the two AP programs compare in their previous academic preparation?

When asked what prepared them most for success in AP classes, several students discussed their participation in Upward Bound, a program for students from low socioeconomic environments. The ability to take notes, read, and listen were study skills learned in previous classes which helped AP students succeed academically.

I had a little preparation because I went to Upward Bound over the summer. They prepare you for standard classes and they try to recommend you for advanced classes.

You can go to Upward Bound for one semester after you graduate. They come here to talk about it and you sign up and go on Saturdays. Over the summer, you live in the campus dorm for six weeks straight and go to class every day for five hours.

Students also discussed their self-motivation. Their desire to escape their socioeconomic environment provided a strong impetus for many students to succeed academically. AP students said they compared themselves to their parents and siblings, and wanted to surpass their families' achievements. They expressed a strong desire to improve their lifestyles, to have money, and to "make something" of themselves.

What prepared me the most was my self-motivation. I don't want to be like other kids who slack off. I want to make something of myself.

I want to go to college and see how far I can go with my education.

I want to do something with my life. I don't want to be poor.

It's going to sound snobby, but I want to rise above everybody else. I don't want to be like everyone else.

You got to make something of yourself, to be somebody and make money. I guess they don't care, they think things are going to come naturally, but I know better. I know you gotta work for what you get.

I have three sisters and three brothers, all older than me. I saw how they turned out and don't want to be like them. They're always saying oh, I should have done this, or I should have done that. I don't want to turn around 10 year later and say, oh, I should have done that. I just want to go and get it over with so I won't have any regrets.

I have three other sisters who never made it past tenth grade and I see how they turned out. That's an inspiration. I'm not going to turn out like that.

You're supposed to do better than your parents and make a better life for your children.

Research question five: how do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?

In order to prepare for the AP examination, American history students said their teacher, Mr. Porter, held one review session after school. Students said American history questions and answers were already written on the blackboard when they arrived for the review. Students were told to copy the questions and answers, and then left the review session without further teacher assistance.

The English AP teacher, Ms. Adams, did not have an end of the year review session, but prepared students for the AP exam throughout the year with daily reading and writing assignments. Students analyzed selected passages sentence by sentence in class discussions and written essays, and were called upon to by the teacher to share their interpretations with the class. Students' written work was graded and returned to them with questions and comments for improvement and their essays were then rewritten.

Research question six: what characterizes students' descriptions and evaluations of their AP classes at the two schools?

Students were asked to describe and evaluate their AP classes. Specifically, they were asked to compare AP classes to standard classes they had taken, to identify the most positive and negative aspects of the AP program, and to describe how participation in the AP program affected them.

When comparing AP to standard classes, students said AP teachers generally treated the AP students as young adults and expected more from them than standard teachers. They said AP classes had a more serious atmosphere than standard classes, and usually smaller enrollments. When compared to standard classes, AP students were given more assignments, and their assignments had more depth to them than assignments in standard classes. AP students' answers had to be thorough, and opinions had to be justified. In addition, almost all AP students interviewed said AP students behaved better than standard students, but acknowledged there was some off task behavior in AP classes.

However, there was a clear split between how AP American history students and AP English students compared their AP classes to standard classes. Most AP American history students described their class in a very negative manner. The AP English students, on the other hand, described their AP class in a very positive manner.

Students in AP American history did not describe many differences between standard and AP history classes. When students described their daily routine,

students in AP American history said the news was on television for the first 10 minutes of every class. After the news show was over, students were given a reading assignment with questions to answer which were due at the end of the class period.

After the daily assignment was announced, Mr. Porter sat at his desk for the duration of the class period.

He just gives us an assignment and sits down. I guess he thinks we're supposed to be on our own. I don't think that happens in college, does it?

We sit down and look at t.v. for a couple of minutes. Then the t.v. goes off. He'll probably fuss at someone and tell them to hush and he'll give us an assignment and that's just it. You can go to sleep or just walk out of class. One or two boys or girls just walk out. Different kids leave when they get fed up with it.

The teacher doesn't go over the work with you. You basically read it for the interpretation yourself.

I feel like I'm on a wild goose chase. You think you're learning the right thing, but when the test comes, you see something totally different. He gives us 20 terms and the essay questions to do in class, and you turn them in and he never passes them back before the test so you could study. So really, you'll just hopefully be prepared before you even turn it in.

He'll give us the work, but it won't be in the chapter he tells us it's in. You have to look in the back of the book to find it.

He gets mad and says "you all are babies, you shouldn't be in AP class" and then he tells us how bad we're going to do in college, we're going to flunk out the first day, we're not going to make it.

Without exception, all of the history students said they were unprepared for the AP exam. The researcher randomly asked students if they could tell her about events which led up to the Revolutionary War. No student could answer the question, and one student asked "does that have to do with land and the north and south?" Another student said "he never explains. That might just be his teaching style."

By comparison, students spoke very favorably about the AP English class and described it as superior to standard English. The teacher, Ms. Adams, was described as caring and challenging, and many students said their writing and reading comprehension skills improved as a result of being in her class. Their descriptions of a typical day consistently involved writing and class discussions. However, only 1 student said she felt confident about taking the AP exam.

There's more work in AP and more thought has to be put into the work because it's harder. In a regular class we wouldn't have a hard poem to understand. I like it. It helps prepare you for college to have some background.

The teacher expects you to know most of the stuff she's teaching. Kids act more mature. You have the top 20 students in the school so you know they're going to be more intelligent and act differently. They look forward to going to college, and in standard, there are just people who just want to graduate.

The work is harder. We don't have those simple questions on the test. We have to write a whole paragraph, and with writing assignments, you don't just tell about the poem but you tell how you feel about it and how the author feels about it, what it really means, and read between the lines.

We read a lot of books and novels and poetry, and have a lot of papers to write. The atmosphere is more serious than in standard because the class is smaller and you can get more attention.

I did not know how to relate the rest of my paper to my thesis statement. I was talking about something different than what had to do with my thesis statement. She explained to me what I was doing wrong, and now I get better grades.

When comparing behavior, students in both AP classes said behavior was better in AP than in standard classes. However, there were behavior problems in AP with students who talked and were off task. Only 1 student said she saw no difference in behavior between students in standard and AP classes.

It's hard to learn in an atmosphere where everybody is cutting up and talking. In AP students talk, but basically, they're serious about what they're doing. They're there to learn.

The kids are more attentive.

AP kids are noisy but they do their work.

The kids don't act differently in AP. They still act like clowns. People are immature, I guess.

Sometimes we have a problem with everybody getting started, but once they get started, it goes well.

In AP, we talk and calm each other. In regular, they don't listen to the teacher.

There are some students who can't handle AP and shouldn't be in there. They cut up a lot.

Students said better teachers could motivate students, which in turn would minimize behavior problems in the classroom. Standard teachers were often described as not caring if students learned, while honors and AP teachers were described as concerned about students' academic progress. Students said standard classes had minimal teacher and student interaction, which resulted in student boredom. They also acknowledged that behavior problems caused some teachers to not care about students' academic performance.

I think here teachers really have to want to be teachers, they really have to have the motivation, because the kids here are so rude.

There are kids who are downright rude, and some of the other kids would like to slap them. They're totally disrespectful and rude, and they're just making fools of themselves.

You'll see a kid cuss the teacher, and the other kids go, yeah, tell him! I've been taught whether you like the teacher or not, he's the authority, so show respect.

It's becoming more and more rare when a teacher cares.

The students tended to describe all standard teachers as having unmanageable students and uncaring attitudes. However, 2 students described a standard English teacher as a very caring person who forced students to work. "She literally stood over you while you did your work." Another student described a teacher who took a personal interest in students and told them they were going to work hard in her course. A fourth student described a concerned and involved standard teacher who stayed after school for club meetings. However, almost all descriptions of standard classes and teachers were negative.

In summary, while Mr. Porter's AP American history class was described negatively, Ms. Adams' AP class was described favorably. The students said Ms. Adams presented a variety of assignments with a different emphasis every nine weeks and students were given frequent writing assignments. They worked on their rough drafts in class and received help from the teacher. Students also discussed assigned readings and received reviews for tests.

The work is more demanding and she goes over it with us a lot. We have a lot of variety. We have writing assignments and quizzes on the stories, and she gives us a different subject every nine weeks. The last nine weeks it was poetry. Now it's novels.

She has questions on the board and we review the questions and take notes.

She'll ask us for our input and we'll grade our work together.

She'll have questions and she'll ask us what do you think and she'll put it in her notes and she'll tell us to write it down.

We have lectures and discussions and group work. Sometimes she may give us a poem and then instead of everybody answering, she'll get us in groups

and as a group we'll answer. We'll give her our answer and she'll tell us if she agrees or not and why she agrees or not. It helps a lot because you can discuss things and hear everybody's opinions about a subject. Sometimes you change your opinion after you hear someone else. You can have your mind set on the information you gathered and then you hear someone else and think, oh yes, that makes sense.

Students were asked to identify the most positive and negative aspects of their AP classes. Again, there was a wide split between how AP history students and AP English students described and evaluated their classes. AP history students had almost unanimous negative evaluations of their class, and the AP English students had almost unanimous positive evaluations of their class.

The English class was held in high esteem because the teacher was well prepared, interacted with the students, reviewed assignments with the students, and had high expectations for them. Also, because of teacher feedback, students were able to see how they had improved in their reading comprehension and writing skills. Some students said their work in AP English helped them on their performance on the PSAT and SAT exams. Their comments about the class also demonstrated a sense of pride in their own accomplishments.

I like the challenge. We're treated fairly, like we're expected to do more, so we're treated like college students. The way she treats us helps us to better understand so when we go to college, we'll do better.

She's a good teacher. She gets you into it. When she reads it out loud, you get into it better.

Other teachers might just grade your writing and give it back to you, but Ms. Adams says you can do better, what can I help you with, and she makes you redo it.

The AP teachers know how to teach. They give us a lot of attention and treat us as if we're smart. They make you feel as if you're going on to higher things. They talk about college all the time.

In contrast, the AP history class was evaluated most often as lacking in teacher-student communication. The students said repeatedly that they did not know what was going on in class and they were left alone to read the text and answer questions. The students said grading criteria were unclear and lacked consistency, feedback was almost nonexistent, and the teacher had little control over the class. A group of students from the AP class went to see the principal after the entire class failed a test. The students claimed the teacher must have used the wrong answer key, but he refused to check the answer key. They also complained about the lack of lectures. The principal met with the teacher to discuss the students' complaints. Upon investigation, Mr. Porter discovered the wrong answer key to the test had been used. The students said after the principal met with Mr. Porter, he lectured several times, then reverted to his previous teaching method of assigning students to outline the chapter, look up vocabulary words, and write essays. The students said lectures resumed when the researcher came to the class for observations.

The first thing we do when we come in is we have downtime, when we watch the news. I read the newspaper, the sports section. Once that's over, I wait for directions from the teacher for what the assignment will be. Once that's over, I start on it, or I may wait until I get home to start on it, or I may ask to go to the library to work on my assignment. You get a worksheet of about 20 terms and about 7 or 8 essay questions. He doesn't go over the material with you, so you basically read it for the interpretation yourself.

On a typical day, we go in the classroom and we have assigned seats, but nobody sits there, and the news comes on for 12 minutes, and we watch it. Well, we don't really watch it. Everybody's talking and rowdy, and then we just sit there, and we sit there, and we sit there, and finally our teacher will

tell us to do an assignment, and it'll be a really boring, dumb, easy assignment, like outline the chapter, or look up terms from the chapter, or do some essay questions. And that's it, and that's all we do.

One time, he gave us an assignment that was two pages long. I lost the second page, but turned in the first page anyway. He stapled somebody else's work to my paper and gave me an A anyway. I was missing a whole page. He gave me an A for only half my work. The kids cheat a lot. When kids turn in their folders, they take other people's folders and turn in the other kid's work with their own names on it, and he would still give them an A.

We write essays every day except when we have a test. Then we get a lecture but you can't understand what he's saying. He goes on and on.

We're just stuck with him the rest of the year. We're taking AP and we're not learning anything from him. People turn in anything for their writing assignments. Sally tried it, just to see. She turned in anything and got an A on it. He doesn't look at what you write, but how much you write. In the progress report, he just puts down what he feels like putting down. He circled R, meaning I was missing work, but the day before, I went up to him and asked him if I was missing work, and he said I had turned in all my work.

When he gets tired of us talking, he hushes us.

There were two assignments given to the students during the course of the year. One assignment was a two page essay based on a historical document and the other assignment was an opinion piece on a controversial subject. The reactions to these two assignments were favorable.

The testing method used during the year was open book tests during the term with a standardized test from the AP curriculum at the end of the nine weeks. The class test grades were usually low, with many failing grades for both open book and standardized tests.

Most of the time we all fail because we have no information on it. He doesn't give us any information, he doesn't review for the test, he doesn't tell us what's going to be on it. He just gives it to us out of the blue. Whatever information we get on there is information that we look up. We confronted

him once, but he didn't listen. He just gets mad. He literally does not lecture. He says nothing but stands there and tells us not to talk. Everybody is usually talking through the whole thing. Everybody sits in groups. Usually all the groups are talking, and he calls out to us and tells us to be quiet.

To prepare for the AP exam, Mr. Porter held one review session. A student described the review session as follows:

He had the 1988 AP exam answers on the board, and I wrote them down. I expected him to lecture, but he didn't. After I wrote down the answers, he said, "OK, baby, you can go home now."

None of the students took the AP exam. They said Mr. Porter called all of their parents at home and told the parents that if the students took the exam and failed, the parents would have to reimburse the School Board \$75 for the cost of the exam. None of the students checked this information to verify its accuracy.

Students were asked if racial and socioeconomic factors had negative or positive effects on the AP program. Almost all students said there was racial tension in the school, but almost no racial tension in AP classes. However, students' selected seating patterns in AP and standard classes were reported to be separated along racial lines in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. The students said white students and African-American students seldom socialized together on the patios or in the cafeteria. When the researcher observed in the AP classrooms, students' seating patterns were clearly in same-race groupings, although the atmosphere was friendly among all students. Also, when students were permitted to form groups to organize presentations, the groups were separated along racial lines. The students insisted, however, that AP students did not have racial animosity in the classroom because they

were interested in learning and working together. Students went to each other for help with their work if they needed it, irrespective of race. Mention was made by 1 student however, of the high percentage of white students in AP and honors classes compared to standard classes (white students were in the minority in the two AP classes observed), although when asked to elaborate, this student said he did not know why this was so.

However, racial animosity was described in differing degrees of severity outside of AP. Students reported white students and African-American students teased and taunted each other, created behavior problems in classes, and sometimes fights erupted. AP students of both races said most of the fights which occurred in the school had more to do with "he say, she say" (gossip) rather than racial animosity. Also, frequent mention was made of the negative reputation of Baker High School, which students said was exaggerated by the media and made parents reluctant to send their children to Baker. Some students suggested that racial disharmony might be the result of peer group expectations, rather than genuine racial intolerance. This was supported by the fact that many of the students at Baker were neighbors who had grown up together and been playmates together in childhood, and students who displayed racial intolerance at school became friendly off school grounds.

White people are not as active as they used to be. They stay to themselves. We don't mix. You rarely see a group of black and white kids together at lunch time. If you go out there, the blacks will be on one side and whites will be on the other side of the patio. Maybe they're just uncomfortable. In AP everyone is nice and easy to get along with. If there's fighting, it's equal, over stupid stuff. It hasn't been a white and black fight in a long time.

In my honors classes, there are more whites than blacks. I've just observed that since I've been here. In honors classes, the ratio is reversed.

There's racial tension, but not so much in AP class, because people are more intelligent in AP.

We sit separately. It's like that in all of our classes. The kids are sort of segregated. Sometimes it's ok, but the first thing that's said, everyone thinks you're racist. But I've been going to school with most of these kids since elementary school, so I'm pretty much used to it. It doesn't bother me now.

Sometimes we have a lot of racial fights around here, but we have more white on white and black on black than white and black fights. We only have two or three black and white fights around here a year.

After a fight between a black and white person, each group wants to beat up all white people or all black people. They think they control the school. I'm my own person and no one controls me, but I won't back down. I was in a few fights in ninth grade and one in tenth grade, but none this year. Someone tripped me down the stairs and he started trying to hit me. Now fighting is not black on black or white on white.

Sometimes in class the black people will be talking about that cracker or the white people will be talking about that nigger. I guess you would think they want the white people to get out so they can have the whole school for themselves. The white people want some of the black people to get out so the school can even out.

A lot of the discipline comes from the blacks. The majority of people here are black so the majority of people getting in trouble are black.

A lot of kids don't like the other kids. Whites don't like blacks and blacks don't like whites, but if they live in the same neighborhood, they'll be all buddy buddy. It changes when they get to school. I guess it's peer pressure. It's like they don't want anything to do with them once they get to school.

Black and white kids throw things at each other, little things, papers, pencils, especially at assemblies.

In ninth or tenth grade, every time we had a pep rally, black boys would go get a white boy, go around a corner and get him, then get on the bus.

The interaction between students and teachers was also perceived by students to be affected by the racial composition of the school. Students of both races were sensitive about whether teachers paid more attention to students of the other race. This complaint was stated from students of both races, and students said this was true in AP classes as well as standard classes. Students of both races said if a teacher of either race answered a student's question first when other students were waiting for the teacher's attention, the teacher was accused of preferring students of the race of the student whose question was answered first. Also, students noticed which students received high grades, and then made assumptions about whether teachers awarded higher grades to students according to race. Some students said teachers were accused of giving higher grades to members of their own race, and although this accusation was described as usually unwarranted, students believed it sometimes occurred. These issues led to angry verbal outbursts in standard classes, but was limited to students complaining among themselves in AP classes.

Racial and socioeconomic factors also affected AP students by creating perceptions of how minority students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were viewed by society. One student said she wanted to disprove the stereotype of African-American underachievement. She said being African American motivated her because "some people think black people aren't smart, and I want to prove them wrong." This student also said if she went to a predominantly white school, she would be even more motivated to do well "because they wouldn't

expect it." This sense of wanting to "prove them wrong" extended to wanting to disprove the stereotype of underachievement in students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. One white student said she went to a school in a middle class area for part of one year, and felt "treated like dirt" when students found out where she had previously lived. This student's sensitivity to negative reactions to her socioeconomic background extended to the belief that teachers discounted her educational achievements because she had received her education at Baker Middle School and Baker High School.

Other students verbalized similar sentiments. They were aware of the negative image of the school portrayed by the media, and voiced disapproval of any behavior, whether physical or academic, that lent credence to the negative image. They were critical of violence and vandalism, and proud of their academic achievements. They were also adamant about the need to do well in school in order to earn a living and escape poverty. Students who did not take school seriously were described as unrealistic about the need to earn a living in order to improve their standard of living.

According to the students interviewed, socioeconomic factors also affected the school program by limiting the variety of AP courses the school could afford to offer. Socioeconomic factors also limited the supply of available equipment, such as computers and new books, and the school had an old, worn appearance. Students' extracurricular activities were curtailed due to lack of funds, and there was no school newspaper. Finally, lack of funds was identified as the factor that curtailed

motivation because students and parents alike believed their efforts were fruitless without financial backing to implement their plans.

We don't get new programs, we don't get money for clubs, organizations, newspapers. Students aren't enthusiastic, they just come.

Anderson looks like a mall. But our school here looks like dirt. When we get up in the morning, we don't want to come. We have roaches and stuff, and it's on the news, too, and gets you mad.

If we had more money, we could have computers. There are some in the library and some classes have two or three. But if we had more computers, we could use games to help us learn.

If you do want to take a class, we don't have a teacher to teach it. We don't have a physics teacher, and some of us want to take it next year. We've been trying to get one, but in order for them to order a new teacher, we need 15 people who say they want to be in it. So far, we don't have 15 people who want to take physics.

The class leaders can't plan anything because we don't have money. Parents would help if we had money, but without money, everyone gives up too easily.

Students' behavior was continually cited as a problem. However, the majority of students did not identify behavior problems as an effect of socioeconomic status. Instead, behavior problems were identified as a conscious choice made by students who did not care about their behavior or academic success. Some students said that discipline problems were caused because parents were busy working and did not have time to discipline their children.

These kids don't act nothing like this at home. When their parents or aunts and uncles come to school and they go to the office, they don't accept nothing. They know they're not supposed to do it. They know. They act in different ways. They don't do this in the house or they get what's coming to them. Once they get out of the house, they think they're on their own.

They act out, especially in public, to get attention, to make a name for themselves, to make them feel they're big and bad, something to make them look better or get what they call "more respect" so people will get out of their way. If they came from homes with money, it would be worse. They would think their parents could get them out.

Teachers are intimidated because they hear about what's happening in the school system with guns and knives, but that's not happening here.

The scenery has nothing to do with it. Motivation is what matters. If we had a new school, soon students would be writing on the walls and scratching paint off the walls. Why do students do that? They have mental problems! If you go to their houses, you might see a perfect house and nice parents, but they do it here. They would have a new school looking like this school in a year. There are just stupid people here who don't like anything new. They would just scratch new paint off the wall.

Some students said the principal's desire to raise the school's status worked against students' interests because numerous suspensions were used to maintain order.

This went against the need to keep students in school.

The principal came here with the kind of macho attitude that he has to be rough and tough. Sometimes sensitivity would make things better.

If you get three tardies, you're suspended for three days, and yet they complain that we don't come to school enough. It makes no sense. A good student could get suspended for being tardy three times, not even three tardies in one class, but anytime. I work in the dean's office, and I see that most of the girls who are suspended are for tardies. It makes no sense.

If you chew gum five times, you get suspended. These guys are getting suspended all the time. You got to try to keep males in schools, cause black men are dying in the streets every day.

I don't like the way the school looks, or the way the principal is. He tries to be so high. He don't talk with us, he talk to us. He got to try to stop comparing us to other schools. He don't motivate anybody, just compares us to other schools.

When asked to describe the ideal school, the most frequently occurring description was of a school with teachers who cared. Next in frequency was students

who cared, followed by lack of racial conflict. Also mentioned were a greater variety of courses, more extracurricular activities, a nicer building with more equipment, and new books. When asked to give their school and AP classes a grade, the school's average grade was C, the AP English class received an A, and the AP American history class received an F.

The lack of teacher involvement was frequently blamed for student apathy. Students said teachers often announced in class that they would present the work and it was up to the students to learn. AP students interpreted this as a lack of caring on the teachers' part. They said standard teachers did not push students to complete work or motivate them to learn. Classes often involved independent seat work. The students acknowledged that student discipline problems contributed to the lack of teacher involvement, but maintained that discipline problems could be minimized if teachers firmly controlled classes, were not intimidated by students, presented class lectures, and did not retire behind their desks. One student said "teachers can give you attention you don't get at home, and that will make you do your work."

Many of the students interviewed said low achieving peers did not care about their school performance and had unrealistic expectations about the future. Apathy from low achievers was also attributed to lack of parental involvement. Lack of parental encouragement was explained by the pressures parents faced in earning a living, and lack of money and time.

A lot of students come from single parent homes and the parents do not have time. A lot of parents work and by the time they get home from work, maybe it's time to sleep and by the time their child leaves for school, maybe they're sleeping.

The AP students all said their parents were pleased they were in AP and encouraged and praised them. In this aspect, they maintained they were different from standard students. AP students described standard students as unreceptive to encouragement to do better in school and overly influenced by peer pressure to reject academic accomplishment. Peer pressure was considered a major factor in student underachievement.

A lot of male students think when they get out of school, they're going to get good jobs, but it's not like that. A lot of them think I'm going to play professional sports and that's it. They think that's going to be a lifetime of money, like they won't hurt their legs. Scouts come after them and they think I can go to college for free and if I'm going to play football I don't have to learn. The girls are more realistic. I rarely hear a girl saying when I graduate I'm going to get a good job. They say when I graduate I'm going to college. You hardly ever hear a boy say that.

Most people want to be in the in crowd. When I bring books home, kids make fun of me and call me a nerd. Most kids worry about that more than making good grades.

The kid who says "sh!" will be the one who is told to get out by the other students. If you say something, you'll get feedback from the other kids, and that will stop the class altogether.

The school budget directly effected classes and school activities. The science department did not have the chemicals and equipment for dissections and labs, although one student conceded "students abused the chemicals and made bombs." Due a the lack of funds, seniors were also unable to pay for a senior activity during the current year. Students voiced a desire for greater integration and for both races to get along better, but this was again tied in with teachers who cared. Teachers were viewed as the mechanism to initiate student involvement and cooperation.

Students were asked to describe how participation in AP affected them on a personal level. Most students said participation in AP made them feel good about themselves, and they viewed themselves as higher achieving and more motivated than standard students. Almost all of the AP students had jobs and participated in school activities, athletics, or church activities.

Reading and writing during leisure time was overall minimal, but television viewing occupied an average of three hours a day. Only 2 AP students reported they watched less than one half hour of television a day. Five students reported they watched five hours of television a day, and 1 student watched six hours a day. The students who watched extensive television said they had jobs and were allowed to leave school at noon to go to work. If their jobs did not start at noon, or if they were between jobs, they went home and watched television or slept.

In summary, AP students at Baker, with few exceptions, had been in honors since middle school and many knew each other since early childhood. Participation in honors and AP provided students with the information and motivation to pursue their education, and all but one student planned to attend college. Few of the AP students' parents had attended college, but encouraged their children to succeed academically and expressed pride in their children's academic accomplishments. Most of the AP students' peer group consisted of other students in honors or AP. Standard students teased them and called them "nerds," but most of the teasing ended by tenth grade. The majority of AP students expressed dislike for student apathy and discipline

problems and distanced themselves from those behaviors because they said they wanted to succeed in a career.

I want the highest I can get. My mother inspires me so much. She tells me not to do what she did, she wants me to go to college and be successful. I see myself as a person trying to learn as much as he can.

Sometimes being in AP boosts me up a little bit. It makes me feel I'm smarter than other kids, but I'm not. I just apply myself more than they do.

Other kids want to take the easy way out. They don't want a challenge. The young men that attend our school and use bad grammar, oh goodness, I correct people all the time. I tell them you might as well start now, so when you do get out, you'll know it.

Some standard kids torment me about silly things--school and grades and stuff. They can tease me if they want to cause I'm going to go to college and be successful. I don't care what they say.

A week ago I got teased. I went into a store and this girl I knew, I was kidding with her. The next day in school they were saying I'm in high classes now, I don't have time to spend with my friends, I think I'm too smart and can't be with my friends. I don't know, I guess it's just words.

A lot of the kids don't even try. They just sit in there and don't do anything. They really don't care. They just want to graduate, and they'll just find low income jobs and hang around. I suppose they'll be happy with that.

Outside of AP, they're jealous. Not mean, just jealous.

Research question eight: how do AP students' academic aspirations compare at the two schools?

Many of the students had not decided on a career choice. The most frequently appearing choice was doctor, followed by business. Other career choices named were as follows: nurse, lawyer accountant, political science major, lawyer, engineer, computer analyst, broadcaster, and Air Force officer. The remaining students

interviewed had not decided upon a career. Many students voiced concern about their ability to do well in college because they were aware of grade inflation in standard classes at Baker due to overall low student achievement levels at the school. Two of the students interviewed had transferred out of Baker, and their grades dropped from an A average to a C average. When they returned to Baker, their grade average went back to an A. Some students said they were concerned about their writing skills and study habits once they went to college.

In tenth grade I went to Whitney (another school) for two semesters, and the work was so hard, I couldn't believe it. The teachers taught, and I didn't know how to react, and my grades went down. I mean way down. I started making more Cs than I ever did in my life. My grades kept falling and falling and falling, and it wasn't because I didn't do the work, it was just all the teaching. This was the average day, you sit down, you get out your notes, and you wait for him or her to start lecturing and he just talks nonstop and I loved it. I thought the atmosphere was so knowledgeable. Then I came back here and I swear, I went from a 2.8 to a 4.0 in nine weeks. That tells you something, absolutely. We get cheated. It's our future that gets cheated.

I know a lot of people who graduated from here and went to college. I have a friend who went to college and she quit and came back to the junior college because it was so hard for her. Then the valedictorian here from 1990 got a full four year scholarship to the university and she quit after the second semester because it was so hard for her, so you can really understand that it's really easy here.

In conclusion, although AP students were career oriented, many were unclear about which career they would pursue. All but 1 student wanted to go to college, but students were concerned about whether they received adequate preparation throughout their school years to enable them to succeed in college.

Students' Responses to Photographs

Students were shown 12 photographs of different parts of their school and asked to describe what they thought or felt about each photograph. They were also asked to group photographs according to whether they elicited positive or negative responses. The researcher reviewed the results to see if patterns could be found on how students described their school environment.

Four of the pictures received nearly unanimous positive responses, and three pictures received about twice as many positive responses as negative responses. One photograph received almost three times as many negative responses as positive responses. Finally, four photographs received nearly equal positive and negative responses and could not be placed into a definite positive or negative category.

Positive responses to photographs

The pictures of the library, band room, gymnasium, and Ms. Adams' AP English class received nearly unanimous positive responses. The comments given by students of the library referred to the library's resources and peaceful atmosphere. Comments included "well equipped with computers," "peace and quiet, relaxing," "resources," "education," "books," and "learning center, information." The picture of the band room was closely identified with music, a family atmosphere, and positive emotions. Comments included "best high school band in the city," "motivator,"

"family," "best band in the county, it's what we're known for," "best band ever," "my home, I love my band room," "music," "making music, playing drums, and talking to my friends," and "happy, harmonious."

The gymnasium evoked comments about sports and fun. Comments included "sports," "pep rally," "track," "basketball," "hang time," "beautiful," "clean and motivating," "exciting," "blood, sweat and tears," and "I like the eagle they painted on the wall." Comments given by students about the picture of Ms. Adams' AP English class referred almost totally to studying. Comments included "brain crashing," "challenging," "education," "work, work, work," "concerned educator," "intense study," "learning," and "actually interested in what they're doing! Working!"

Three of the photographs fell into the positive category, although about one third of responses to these photographs were negative. One photograph one was of the science lab and evoked comments about the appearance of the room and the work done in science lab. Comments included "labs," "chemistry," "science project," "laughter," "Mr. Peters," "plain," "very light," and "experiments." Negative comments referred to not being able to use the lab due to lack of funds for lab supplies.

The second photograph was of the AP American history class in session which showed students as they organized their notebooks to turn in at the end of the class period. All the positive comments referred to working, and included "busy," "students self-motivated," "learning," "work," and "activity." Negative comments referred to students "talking, having fun, not working," "they're probably writing

notes to each other," and "unusual to be working." Negative comments referred to the possibility that students were doing other work than the work assigned to them, and that they were working "for a change."

The third photograph was of the guidance office. Although negative comments referred to counselors as "no help," most comments were positive and referred to receiving help and information. Comments included "college," "helpful, you can always get what you came for," "resources, help you with goals," and "outstanding, willing to work with you."

Negative responses to photographs

Only one photograph, the picture of the empty AP history classroom, received many negative responses, which referred to appearance of the room and to the assignments. The most frequently used word was "boring." Other comments included "small and not attractive," "small and also sorry," "fights," "no lecture," "dark," "no education," and "don't learn anything." Positive comments included "learning," "sometimes fun," and "Richard is in that class."

Neutral category

Photographs of the cafeteria, locker, outside view of Baker, and an outdoor eating patio evoked nearly equal positive and negative responses. Negative comments about the picture of the cafeteria referred to fights and dirt. These comments included "crazy, confusion, food fights," "afraid," "dirty, I don't like it," "rude

women work there," and "too small, very unattractive." Positive comments referred mainly to socializing and the word "food," which was used repeatedly.

The photograph of the lockers evoked negative comments about crowds and the appearance of the hallway. Comments included "noisy," "push and shove," "dark, it's always dark in the annex," "ugly," "unattractive," "fights," and "needs to be remodeled." Positive comments mainly involved socializing. Comments included "friends," "boys," "fun," and "talking with friends."

The photograph of the outside of Baker High School received negative comments which referred to the appearance of the school. These comments included "needs paint job," "dirty," "dreary, looks like a prison," "windows look bad," and "definitely needs to be remodeled." Positive comments referred to loyalty and happy feelings about the school. Comments included "welcome," "great, wonderful," "I love my school," "nice," and "friends, learning, teachers."

The photograph of an outdoor eating area received negative comments which referred mainly to vandalism. Negative comments included "destruction," "so many fights out there," "people tear up the benches and tables and throw garbage cans," "vandalism," "makes me sick, kids take seats off and break them," "dirty," and "white people hang out there." Positive comments referred to socializing and the atmosphere. These comments included "sunny," "fresh air," "communicating with friends," "relaxing," "lunch," "improved," and "nice looking."

In summary, when shown pictures of various locations in their school, the AP students' comments indicated they had positive feelings about their school and they

considered themselves to be part of the whole school environment. Only the photo of the AP history class received mainly negative comments, while photos which depicted achievement and school spirit (AP English class, library, band, and gymnasium) were described in extremely positive terms. The remainder of the photos received either mainly positive responses or an equal number of positive and negative responses. Overall, students praised areas which evoked comments about a positive, relaxing atmosphere, hard work, and friendship. Students were critical of a dirty environment, vandalism and fighting, and inadequate help from teachers and counselors. They appeared to identify themselves with the student body as a whole because activities outside of AP evoked comments of loyalty and the sense of being a family.

Observations in AP American History Class

The classroom had a gray floor, no carpet, pale blue walls and a dark blue front door with black marks on it. The front door was in the upper right hand corner of the room and faced seven rows of five desks each. To the right of the door was a cabinet and garbage can and to the left of the door was a bulletin board which contained class rules. Next to the bulletin board was a poster about famous people and above the bulletin board, attached to the wall, was a television set. Next to the first bulletin board was another bulletin board with a display on the Bill of Rights. The side wall perpendicular to the front wall had a blackboard on it which covered almost the full length of the wall. The back wall contained tall windows which and

an audiovisual cart. Another blackboard was on the fourth wall and it occupied most of the length of the wall. Next to the blackboard was a display entitled "Wall of Fame" which contained students' work. In front of the blackboard was the teacher's desk, which was situated next to a table. The researcher sat in the first row of desks facing the door in the third seat from the back because the activities in the room were clearly visible from this seat.

During the first observation, students came into the class talking and joking. The researcher noticed that the seven white students in the class sat together at the left side of the room in two rows. The teacher, Mr. Porter, turned the television on at 7:20 a.m. to enable students to watch the news. Three students appeared to watch the news, which was barely audible above the classroom conversation. At 7:30 a.m., Mr. Porter turned off the news and distributed textbooks, which were locked in a closet. He introduced the researcher to the class, and told the students he hoped the presence of the researcher "will spark your interest in your schoolwork." A student burped loudly and one student called out to another student "you have to talk a certain way cause you're in AP."

As the teacher lectured on the post-Reconstruction era the room was quiet. Four students wrote while turning pages in their textbook, which gave the appearance they were completing an assignment rather than taking notes from the lecture. No other students were observed writing during the lecture. Two students left their seats to throw paper in the waste basket.

Mr. Porter repeatedly said "ok" after his sentences. One student frequently answered back "ok." At 7:45 a.m., a student entered the room and sat down. Someone whistled a tune softly. Two students carried on a conversation, while the whistling continued and one student put her head down. A student raised his hand, but the teacher did not respond to him. Mr. Porter told the class "pay attention to me, please!" Just then, a messenger came for two students. As the students left, one called out to another student "your mamma!" Both students laughed. As the lecture continued, a student left her seat to use a stapler on the teacher's desk, and one student tapped her foot for about 15 seconds. Another student began singing softly, while a group of students to the right of the researcher began a conversation. One student raised his hand and asked "has the Emancipation Proclamation come in yet?" The teacher responded "oh, come on!" The student rephrased his question "I mean, did the south accept it?" The teacher briefly explained how southerners reacted to the Emancipation Proclamation, and then continued with his lecture. At one point, Mr. Porter said "education is the best gift the black man received." A student called out "true!" The teacher continued to lecture, and then said "come on, talk to me!" when no one volunteered to answer a question. Three students then attempted to answer his question. Towards the end of class, Mr. Porter told students to take out a sheet of paper and copy down four main points as he read them out loud. At the conclusion of his lecture, several students applauded.

At the beginning of the second observation, a girl walked into the class and approached another girl who was sitting at a desk. She asked the seated girl "can I

have my seat back? You're sitting in my seat." The seated girl ignored her. The girl who was standing then sat in front of the researcher. After a few minutes, the seated girl quietly stood up and sat elsewhere, and the first girl sat in the vacated seat. At this same time, a male student walked up to the podium and stood there, while he laughed and looked around the room. After about 10 minutes, the teacher walked to the podium. The boy continued to laugh, but when the teacher put his hand on the boy's shoulder and talked to him quietly, the student sat down. Throughout this time, the teacher sporadically called out "sh!" He called out "listen!" three times, because the news was on the television, and students were talking to each other rather than listening to the news.

At 7:32 a.m., the news was turned off. Several students were excused to go to the library. Mr. Porter introduced his lecture, which was on America in the 1890s. During the introduction, he issued four reminders to be quiet, said "sh!" twice, and said "someone is talking. That's rude." His 20 minute lecture was interspersed with "those who are talking shouldn't have come if they didn't want to listen," "talk about it later," "someone is talking," and many exclamations of "sh!" A student yawned very loudly, 1 student called out a correction to the teacher's pronunciation of a word, a boy started whistling, 2 students had their heads down, and only 4 students were taking notes. Mr. Porter called out 4 students by name, told them to sit up, and said "make me think you care about what I'm trying to do this morning."

During the second half of the class period, students were told to break into small groups and choose a topic. Each group was to develop a visual presentation on their topic using poster board. They were also to write a report on their topic. The five topics included the Democratic platform of 1886; labor unrest and reform; silver versus the gold standard; power of political issues; and return of economic prosperity. Students divided themselves into groups. The researcher noted that none of the groups were racially integrated. When students debated about which group would take which topic, Mr. Porter assigned topics to the groups. Students were given approximately 20 minutes to complete their visual presentations and write their reports. One student kept his head down the entire time his group worked on the project. The teacher called out "sh!" approximately 11 more times. None of the projects were completed by the end of the class.

On the third day of observations, the news was on the television, while students talked to each other. When the news was turned off, the teacher announced he would begin a review for the nine week exam and notebooks would be collected on Wednesday. Several students were then excused to work in the library. The remainder of the class broke into their small groups to continue to work on their projects from the previous day. Students were given an additional 20 minutes to work on their projects. While the groups were working, the researcher noticed one student reading a newspaper and one student reading a book. Three students appeared to be working on another assignment. The teacher walked to where the researcher was sitting and asked the researcher "can you tell who the bad kids are? They're

more hyper." At 8:03 a.m., the teacher announced that if the students finished by 8:05, each group could give a three minute presentation and the whole class could present their projects by the time the bell rang. A student called out "yeah, right!" By the time the bell rang, no one had finished the project.

On the fourth observation, the news was on the television at the beginning of class and one student was watching it. Two girls argued about seating because the girl who was seated would not give up her seat. The girl who was standing sat somewhere else. Meanwhile, a girl who appeared to be approximately seven months pregnant came into the class. The teacher told her "don't put down your books." She yelled at him "they're too heavy!" and walked out of the room. Six minutes later, she came back in the room with a tardy slip and tossed it on the teacher's desk. He called her back to his desk, handed her the tardy slip, and she left the room, talking angrily to the teacher. The student who sat directly in back of the researcher said "he sent her out, then gave her a tardy slip. He's so retarded." After the news was over, the teacher made announcements, and the girl who had been sent out of the room reentered and sat down.

The teacher said the groups would present their reports. One student said "Mr. Porter, the person responsible for our written report isn't here." The teacher answered "then I will grade accordingly." The student said "you can't." The teacher replied "yes, I can." The student again said "no, you can't" and mumbled as he continued to color the poster he was supposed to present. Another group was chosen to make their presentation first. A girl from the group stood up to speak, and said

her group did not have their poster ready, but she would read their report. After she finished her verbal presentation, another group of five students stood up together. Their poster was incomplete. One student asked members of her group "what was our report about?" The teacher said "you don't even know what your report is about!" The girl explained that the group member who had the report was absent, but the report was about foreign nations that fought America over gold. One student called out "America duked it out!" At 7:48 a.m. the teacher postponed group presentations, walked to the podium, and began to lecture. Three students had their heads down while a group of students talked in the back of the room, 6 students took notes, and one student read a newspaper. The teacher called out "please pay attention to me!"

After five minutes, the teacher interrupted his lecture and said "you were given a handout. If it's ready, I'll take it now." No one had the handout. The teacher asked a student to pass out a second handout. One girl had her head down on her desk. As the handout came to her, she lifted her elbow without lifting her head. The student who passed out the handout slid the handout under the seated girl's elbow, who then put her elbow down on the handout without ever lifting her head or looking up. The teacher continued to lecture while he sat sideways at the podium without facing the students. A student seated in back of the researcher said to students sitting near her, "I don't know what he's talking about. Do you?" The other students answered "no." The first student said in a loud voice "it's a waste of time 'cause he's not explaining like he's supposed to." Another student sighed in a loud,

exaggerated tone and the student in back of the researcher said again "do you know what he's talking about?" Two students read the newspaper, while another 2 students passed notes. The teacher woke the girl who was sleeping and said "sit up, honey darling. Make believe you're interested in obtaining knowledge." A student then called out "no one knows what you're talking about!" as she stood up to borrow a stapler from the teacher's desk. The teacher did not respond. The student sat down mumbling "well, no one knows what you're talking about." The teacher continued to read his review fact sheet to the class. A student called out loudly "what are you talking about? No one knows what he's talking about!" The teacher continued to read his fact sheet out loud, and did not respond to the student. Someone whistled a tune softly and the student who borrowed the stapler stood up to return it. The bell rang and class ended.

During the last observation, after the news, the teacher made announcements about a make up test. A student told Mr. Porter she was not ready for the make-up test. Mr. Porter had difficulty being heard due to students talking in the class, and he called out "please, please let me speak. Please, Please! Sh! Sh!" Students were told to spend the class period organizing their notebooks into three sections: home and class assignments, charts and maps, and exams and reports. The teacher continued to make comments such as "this does not call for talking. Sh!" The entire class period was spent with students organizing their notebooks or talking and 2 students slept. Right before the bell rang, the teacher walked over to the researcher

and said "they are so rude. They don't want you to say anything to them but they want to run their mouths."

Observations in AP English Class

The classroom had white walls and dark blue cabinets with dark blue trim. The back wall was pale blue, the floor was pale gray with no carpet, and the room was bright and in excellent condition. As students entered the room, the front wall was to the immediate right of the door. The front wall contained a large blackboard which covered most of the length of the wall. In the upper right hand corner above the blackboard was an American flag and in the upper left hand corner above the blackboard a television was attached to the wall. In front of the blackboard was a cart with an overhead projector on it and next to the cart was a small bookcase and a podium. To the left of the front door was the teacher's desk which contained a computer and printer. A large blackboard covered most of the length of the wall to the left of the front door. Mounted on the wall above the blackboard were 10 pictures of famous buildings. The back wall contained nine pictures of French Impressionist paintings. The fourth wall, which was directly across from and facing the teacher's desk, contained two large sections of windows which filled up most of the wall space. In front of the right section of windows were a table and chairs, a book case, and a file cabinet. Five rows of students' desks, with seven desks per row, faced the front blackboard. The researcher sat in the last seat of the third row because all activities in the room were visible from that position.

During the first observation, Ms. Adams returned tests and reviewed answers briefly. She then told the class to break into three small groups to complete their assignment, which was to identify quotations as parody, irony, overstatement, or understatement. As students worked, Ms. Adams walked around the room to offer her assistance. Some students displayed frustration by comments such as "it's stupid," "I can't figure out what it is," "it doesn't make sense to me." One student asked the teacher what the words "pun" and "immortal" meant. When the students continued to have difficulty with the assignment, Ms. Adams suggested the class complete the assignment together. The students returned to their desks and Ms. Adams led a discussion on the meaning of selected quotations. At one point Ms. Adams asked what the word "flail" meant, and a student said it meant "slavery." As the discussion continued, students raised hands as well as called out answers to questions. One student responded to a question by calling out "doting, or whatever that means." Another student called out "I'm confused now." When Ms. Adams asked for a definition of the word "creed" most of the class did not know the meaning of the word. At one point in the class discussion, after a student answered a question, another student teased the student by stating "I can't accept that!" Later, when another student answered a question and Ms. Adams told her the answer was correct, the student called out "hot dog!" Ms. Adams asked many prodding questions, provided immediate feedback, and smiled and nodded frequently at students.

During the second observation, students discussed figures of speech in poetry. They were asked to read selected stanzas out loud and identify examples of personification, paradox, overstatement, and understatement. The room was very quiet, and all students took notes during the discussion. An African-American student asked to read a poem out loud which contained the word "nigger" and he said when he was a child, he never thought about prejudice. A student agreed with him, and then the class continued the previous discussion on poetry, which was led by Ms. Adams, who did most of the talking. However, she asked many questions as she talked, and explained answers when students needed clarification. The last five minutes of class were spent discussing grades. All students remained on task and seated until the class was over.

During the third observation, Ms. Adams first collected work from students. One of the boys handed in his work and said "here, babe" to the teacher. She rebuked him and he said "you know you're a babe; you're a major babe." Ms. Adams then turned to collect another student's work and began a class discussion on irony in poetry. After the discussion the students were asked to break into two groups, and each group was assigned one of the following two essay questions: "how does the use of irony facilitate Holman's criticism of Z and society?" and "how does the poet's and Duke's view of himself contrast, and suggest the purpose for the disparity." Ms. Adams reminded students to have a thesis statement and told them they had 12 minutes to complete their essays. The class remained quiet and students were on task the entire time, except for 1 student who walked across the room to talk

to a girl sitting in front of the researcher to ask "can I have some cookies?" When the 12 minutes were over, Ms. Adams began a discussion on Z, an African American who tried to pass as white in order to fit into white society. When Ms. Adams asked "what was his strategy for acting white?" a student called out "he went to Anderson High!" Students appeared interested in the poem, and actively participated in the discussion. Finally, Ms. Adams asked students what they thought was the meaning of the poem. One student said "he's the universal black person" and the teacher and students applauded. Ms. Adams then led a discussion on the next poem, The Duchess and students again participated. When the lesson was over, a group of boys who sat at the front of the room engaged in a conversation which was audible across the room. One boy, who had a paper taped to the back of his shirt, said "well, they'll have a pretty baby." Another student said "I wonder what color the baby will be." A third laughed and said "he's so stupid."

During the fourth observation, the students were noisy when the teacher gave instructions about the writing assignment. She said "don't give me any grief today." A minute later, as talking continued, she said "excuse me, or rather, excuse you!" The class immediately quieted down. Ms. Adams circulated through the room, and helped students with their essay from the previous day. However, the atmosphere was restless and the researcher counted 7 students off task, talking and laughing. An eighth student left his seat to walk across the room to ask a girl a question. As Ms. Adams circulated and checked students' writing assignments, she told a girl to relate her thesis statement to her paper. The girl replied "I can't." Students continued to

talk and remained talkative the entire class period. At the end of the class, the Ms. Adams asked a student "do you have anything written down yet?" and he replied "yeah, but I didn't bring it." Right before the bell rang, someone began singing and the room was noisy.

During the fifth observation, Ms. Adams began class by telling students to sit down and take out their papers that were due. Two students did not have their papers and the teacher told them not to turn in their papers late because she would not grade them. After the papers were collected, students were told to begin their writing assignment, which was on the blackboard. The students' assignment was to read the prologue of Ethan Fromme by Edith Wharton and to answer the following questions: describe Ethan Fromme as he is first seen by the narrator; why has Ethan remained in Starfield? A student was asked to read the prologue out loud to the class. As she read, the class was attentive, and remained quiet and on task the remainder of the period as they completed their writing assignment. Once during the class a student asked the teacher why he should have to take a test because "I missed the review." Students remained on task until the last five minutes of class, when they stopped working and began talking to each other.

In summary, after observing five sessions in each AP class, the researcher concluded that the AP American history class had little structure or curricular focus. Students were given seat work which involved little interaction from the teacher, or were given lectures which they did not understand. Even when students told the teacher they did not understand his lecture, he remained unresponsive to their

comments, and often did not face students as he lectured. The students were inattentive and openly rude to the teacher. When they voiced frustration or confusion, their comments were ignored. On the other hand, the AP English class showed both planning and curricular focus. Although students were at times off task, their behavior caused little disruption. Every day, the day's assignment was written on the blackboard before students entered the room. When students were confused, the teacher explained answers and helped students comprehend by asking prodding questions. Students actively participated in class discussions, expressed pleasure when told their answers were correct, and followed the teacher's leadership in the classroom.

Teachers' Interviews

AP Teachers

Teachers were interviewed to answer the following research questions.

Question 1: What are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?

Question 4: How do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?

Question 5: How do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?

Ms. Adams, the AP English teacher, had a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in English education. She had taught English for 20 years, and the current year (1992-1993) was her first year as an AP teacher. She was assigned her teaching position because the previous AP teacher did not have a master's degree in English, which prevented students from receiving dual enrollment credit from the local junior college. Mr. Porter, the AP American history teacher, had a bachelor's degree in history, a master's degree in administration, and had taught history for 21 years. The current school year was also his first year as an AP teacher and he was assigned the position because the previous AP history teacher did not have a master's degree.

Research question one: what are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?

To be admitted to AP classes, students were required to have an A or B average in their previous honors class in the subject they wished to take for AP credit. Students were also required to receive the recommendation of their honors teacher in the subject they wished to take for AP credit. If a student did not meet these requirements, he or she could still take an AP course, but was required to sign a contract promising to read books on a prerequisite book list.

Research question four: how do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?

The current school year (1992-1993) was Ms. Adams' and Mr. Porter's first year of teaching AP. Both teachers said they expected AP students to be well behaved and motivated to learn. However, both teachers said their students did not meet their expectations.

Mr. Porter: I thought the kids would have more reading comprehension and would be easier to motivate. I expected students who all had a desire and a hunger to go to college, and were not involved in so many different activities. The kids who misbehave ignite others with their misplaced, playful behavior.

Ms. Adams: I expected students who were well behaved and who would listen. They're not motivated enough to be well behaved, to turn in their work on time. They don't do their work in class. If I stand in front of the class, most of them are listening and taking notes, but there are some who aren't and I find this very strange. They don't know how to take notes, even at this level. It's always "wait!" or "repeat that again!" They want to write down every single thing, sentence by sentence.

Both teachers said their students had academic difficulties and discipline was a problem because students were playful in class and did not give teachers sufficient respect. Mr. Porter attributed the lack of academic success to students' participation in a great amount of extracurricular activities. He said students did not have time to study. Ms. Adams, on the other hand, said students did not have the skills or the discipline to do AP work. Ms. Adams described the boy who was the class clown. She reported that he disrupted the class by calling out answers such as "sex!" Ms. Adams said this boy once stood in front of the class and delivered a facetious lecture on "400 years of oppression," which disrupted the class and made his

classmates laugh. Both teachers said there were no differences between standard and AP students' behavior or motivation.

Ms. Adams: The students are not self-directed and don't know how to take notes. They don't know how to organize their thoughts or pull out main ideas. I can't just give them an in-class assignment and expect them to do it because most will just start talking to each other. I don't know if this is typical of the age, but often they don't see the teacher as being older, as being the authority. They think you're on their level. They will talk to you in any manner. They're not mean kids. They're playful. They want a good grade for the very, very least amount of work they can do.

Neither teacher found major differences in how they graded their AP and standard students, although Ms. Adams had higher expectations for AP students' writing assignments. Mr. Porter included both AP and standard students' folders and assignment logs as one third of their final grade. Another third of their grade came from homework, and the final third of their grade came from examinations. The last nine weeks of school, he gave students open book exams. Mr. Porter said students received study guides for the open book tests two days before the exam, and he reviewed the exam answers with students after the tests had all been graded. Mr. Porter also said he presented the curriculum through a mixture of independent work, lecture, and group work.

Mr. Porter: I give them four essay questions to do in class and three to do for homework. The second day, I will lecture on the chapter and we will outline the chapter together. The third day and fourth day, review, and the fifth day, if the children are ready, they will have an exam.

Ms. Adams said her students wanted As, but did not want to work for their grades. When reviewing for a test, she stated students wanted to know the exact wording of the exam questions. Out of her class of 15 students, Ms. Adams said she

had 5 students capable of doing AP work and 2 who could possibly pass the AP exam. Despite the students' limitations, she said her role as an AP teacher was "to prepare students for college." Mr. Porter said his role was to motivate students to perform on the college freshman-level. However, both teachers said most of their students did not function academically on the college-level and Ms. Adams stated she did not believe her students could take the AP exam.

Ms. Adams: They can't take the AP test. They're not intelligent enough. They're not really AP quality. The motivation isn't there.

Both teachers said their teaching goals in AP classes were different from their goals in standard classes. Mr. Porter said he tried to teach AP students to analyze what they read, whereas in standard classes, students covered the material at a faster, less in-depth pace. Previous AP history students had not performed well on the AP history exam, and Mr. Porter said their greatest weakness was in writing critical essays. Therefore, his curricular goal was to have students practice writing essays during the year. Ms. Adams said in standard classes, her goal was to help students improve their skills so they could raise their skills to grade level. In AP, she taught students to interpret the material they read.

Research question five: how do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?

Although the teachers expressed skepticism about their students' ability to pass the AP exam, Mr. Porter said he planned to implement review sessions for the exam, although plans for the review session were not finalized. Ms. Adams prepared

students for the AP exam by daily writing assignments and passage analysis in class.

However, she said she would only recommend that 3 of her students take the exam.

The teachers were asked if they thought the racial and socioeconomic composition of Baker High School affected the AP program. Both teachers said the low socioeconomic environment contributed to student apathy.

Mr. Porter: You would think having less would make someone want more. I have found that some of these kids are satisfied with the status quo, although there are others who are pushing themselves.

Ms. Adams: Somewhere along the line, these kids were identified as above average and put in a group. They've never been out of that group. They just keep being pushed along. But these are the same old kids who were not going to read for homework, who were not going to prepare lessons ahead of time or read anything more than once. The make-up of these students is different. I can't just stand up and deliver a lecture. It would go right over their heads. They're not participating like they should, either.

Standard Curriculum Teachers' Interviews

The standard curriculum teachers were asked to describe their role, curriculum focus, students, and to compare standard classes to AP classes. They were also asked to identify qualities they thought were needed to be an AP teacher and factors which they thought could be changed in the AP program. Finally, they were asked to identify ways they perceived the racial and socioeconomic composition of Baker High School affected the AP program. The purpose of the interviews was to find out how the standard teachers interviewed for this study described the AP program.

Ms. Knight, a standard history teacher, had been a middle school social studies teacher for three years in another county. She had taught ninth-grade social

studies for two years in the county used in this study. At the end of the 1992-1993 school year, Ms. Knight was told she would replace Mr. Porter as the AP American history teacher. Ms. Knight expressed great enthusiasm over her new assignment. Ms. Brown, the standard English teacher, had been an English teacher for 22 years, and had always taught standard classes.

Both teachers described their roles as motivational. Ms. Knight said her role as a standard teacher was to raise students' expectations so they would put forth their full effort. Ms. Brown stated her role was to facilitate learning, to show students how to gather information, and to teach students skills required to succeed in life. Both teachers had different perspectives on the role of the AP class at Baker.

Ms. Knight: At this school, AP functions primarily as an honors class.

Ms. Brown: I see a big difference between AP and standard. AP should be on a much higher level than standard classes, and it should prepare students for college level course work.

Ms. Knight said a teacher with great expectations at Baker would "get your knees cut out from under you" and experience "burnout" due to lack of cooperation between the parents, administration, and teachers. The curricular focus in her standard class was teaching social studies using concrete examples from daily life so students could relate the curriculum to their lives. Ms. Baker focused the curriculum on writing because students would need writing skills for resumes, reports, research, and job skills. Both viewed the AP curriculum as focused on the development of critical thinking skills and preparation for college work. Both teachers described standard students as easily distracted with short attention spans. Ms. Brown said her

students "want to be entertained and babied." In contrast, both teachers had high expectations for AP students.

Ms. Knight: When I teach AP, I'll be able to do a lot more, and have a lot of discussion. I'll be able to do creative things that won't get out of hand. The students are very intellectual.

Ms. Brown: AP students are very dedicated to learning, more so than other children. They do what they need to do and are sometimes overly concerned with grades.

Both teachers graded their standard students based on assignments, exams, and class participation. They also said AP students should be evaluated with higher teacher expectations than standard students. Specifically, AP students should demonstrate depth of thought, writing skills, and analytical ability. Ms. Knight said when she teaches AP next year, a student who can defend his or her answer logically and clearly will be given credit for the answer whether or not she agrees with his or her interpretation. Although both teachers said they did not currently have students in their classes who should be in AP, Ms. Knight said she believed the AP American history class in the past year had students enrolled who were not qualified to be in the class. AP should be changed to allow only qualified students in the class, she said. Ms. Brown, on the other hand, said some students were "late bloomers" and should be allowed in AP if they showed an interest in doing the work.

When asked to describe the qualities needed in an AP teacher, both teachers said creativity was extremely important. They also mentioned the ability to challenge students to develop their critical thinking skills.

Ms. Knight: Teachers need to go beyond dry facts and teach critical thinking. They need to talk about why things happened, and bring in all the bizarre facts.

Ms. Brown: An AP teacher should be very open to creativity by the students.

Neither teacher believed AP teachers were alienated from the faculty, that AP students were alienated from the rest of the student body, or that AP teachers deserved additional compensation. Ms. Brown stated the discipline problems she handled made up for the extra work load of AP teachers.

The teachers were asked if they thought the racial and socioeconomic composition of the school affected the AP program. Neither teacher thought racial factors had a direct impact on the AP program. However, both teachers believed socioeconomic factors affected AP and standard classes. According to Ms. Baker, students of low socioeconomic environments did not have the enriched backgrounds needed to succeed in an AP class. Ms. Knight said low socioeconomic environments affect students' motivation, expectations, and views of the world. Ms. Knight stated teachers did not have high expectations of students from low socioeconomic environments, and therefore the students were not motivated. She said the same uninspiring teacher at Baker would change at an affluent school. "In Anderson, you'd see a different teacher because the students are expected to do better," she said. She

also stated students from more affluent homes learned to make a connection between education and success.

Ms. Knight: Affluent kids probably see their parents get dressed to go to work from nine to five, and carry a brief case, and realize that success means education. A lot of kids at our school, the parents don't work or have menial jobs or are in and out of work, and the kids don't see that tie between education and success. Also, these kids see the welfare system. They see people getting money, and they keep having kids because they get money for it.

Vice Principal's Interview

Ms. Kolesar, the vice principal of Baker High School, was interviewed to find out how she described the purpose of the AP program at Baker. She was also asked to define admission criteria to the AP program, AP teacher selection methods, and what she perceived to be the effects of racial and socioeconomic factors on the AP program at Baker.

Ms. Kolesar stated the purpose of the AP program was to expose students to a wide variety of learning experiences in order to prepare them for college-level work. The criteria for admission to the AP program were a minimum B average in the prerequisite honors course and the recommendation of the honors course teacher in the subject area students wished to take for AP credit.

AP teachers were required to have a master's degree in the subject area they taught. Ms. Adam's was selected to teach English at the beginning of the current school year because she had a master's degree and the previous AP English teacher did not. The same was true of Mr. Porter, who was also selected to teach AP

American history at the beginning of the current school year because he had a master's degree, and the previous AP American history teacher did not. Both teachers were the only faculty in their respective departments who had master's degrees.

At Baker, students who took AP courses could receive college credit even if they did not pass the AP exam. They did this through simultaneous enrollment in the dual enrollment program sponsored by the local junior college. Under the dual enrollment guidelines, students were required to earn a minimum of a C average in the course and pass the teacher written final exam.

To receive dual enrollment credit, the teacher of the course was required to have a master's degree. Baker was cited by junior college officials for being out of compliance with the dual enrollment requirements, which resulted in the reassignment of AP teachers at the beginning of the current school year.

Ms. Kolesar said the greatest benefit of the AP program was that it exposed students to more information and learning experiences than standard classes. The disadvantages included making sure the instructor was doing his or her job, the elitist attitude AP students sometimes developed, and the separation of high achievers from low achievers.

Ms. Kolesar: We're taking the very good kids out of classes where they could be good role models, where they could be peer teachers, where they could have a positive influence in another class. They're isolated. Their peers are not really seeing what their abilities are and how they're going about being as successful as they are.

According to Ms. Kolesar, the racial and socioeconomic composition of Baker High School had a major impact on the AP program. AP teachers had to pay their own fees for any AP workshops they wished to attend, excluding the free workshops given on planning days. Lack of funds limited the amount of AP classes the school could offer to only three classes. Plans to offer AP calculus were dropped because only five students signed up for the class.

Ms. Kolesar: We're looking at the philosophy and purpose of the school. Can you justify those 5 students taking a class period of the teacher's time when you would then have 42 students in general math, for example? We can't compete with the giants around us. Jefferson High (another high school) has over 2,000 kids and can afford to offer these classes if they're that small, because when you spread it around that many teachers, it isn't going to make a significant difference.

Parental involvement was also limited at Baker. "You have to look at the community we serve," Ms. Kolesar said. She explained that parents who did not have an education did not understand the need for their children to be educated. Many of Baker's graduates were the first in their families to graduate from high school. Consequently, guidance counselors assumed the responsibility for informing students and parents about college choices and financial assistance. College representatives were continually invited to come to Baker to speak to students, and every October the guidance office sponsored a Sunday afternoon tea for all the seniors and their parents. During the tea, the guidance counselors provided parents with information about scholarships, dates when representatives would be on campus, and spoke with them about college applications and financial aid. The guidance office also provided financial aid workshops.

As part of the school improvement plan, guidance counselors and administrators encouraged students to take advanced classes. However, in order to address the economic necessity of employment faced by many students, honors and AP classes were all scheduled to meet during morning hours. Therefore, students who left school at noon to go to their jobs were able to enroll in AP classes in the mornings. Despite efforts to encourage students to take AP classes, students still avoided those classes.

Ms. Kolesar: Even though we advertise AP in the curriculum guide, I don't think it's what you would call a big draw. When kids come from ninth grade and have been in honors programs, which are very large classes, they find out they're really not able to do honors work or they don't have the commitment to do honors. So, we want to target those kids who are really successful as ninth-graders and try to prime those kids to go into AP classes later on.

Academically, students from low socioeconomic environments had difficulty in the AP classes, Ms. Kolesar said, because they often had not been exposed to critical, higher order thinking in their educational backgrounds. Students were also very reluctant to take the AP exam. "Our kids do not do well on the AP exam," Ms. Kolesar said. In the past, only a few have made a score of 3 on the exam, and higher scores have been extremely rare.

Ms. Kolesar: We really have to encourage the kids to take the test because they don't want to take it, they don't have to take it, and they don't feel prepared to take it. It's a real hassle trying get them to actually take it because the preparation is lengthy. Maybe they don't see the validity of taking it, or maybe they just don't have the confidence that they're going to do well on it.

Ms. Kolesar identified the lack of student confidence as the reason more students did not take advanced classes. "They're afraid. They want to be safe in the

lower classes." In addition, other schools, such as the college preparatory magnet school, "skim off the cream" of Baker's top students. Consequently, "the C students then become the A students" at Baker, with inflated, unrealistic views of their own abilities.

Guidance Counselors' Interviews

Two guidance counselors, Ms. Walker and Ms. Bryant, were interviewed to find out how they described the role of the AP program at Baker High School and how the racial and socioeconomic composition of Baker High School affected the AP program. Both counselors' answers agreed on many points. Both said the entry criteria for AP classes included teacher recommendation and at least a B average in the previous honors course. Most of the AP students were in honors classes since ninth grade, and AP was the next logical step in course selection.

Teachers of AP classes were required to have a master's degree in the AP subject they wished to teach. Both counselors perceived the AP teachers as having prestige among their peers for teaching the high achieving students and for having a greater work load than standard teachers. Both counselors also described great differences between AP classes and standard classes.

Ms. Walker: There is no comparison between standard and AP English classes. They are light years apart. Even freshman English classes at the college level are often not as intense as AP English classes.

Both counselors described AP students in very positive terms. The students were described as capable, hard working, and college bound. Ms. Walker said

approximately 99% of AP students later attended college, while Ms. Bryant said 90% attended college.

Ms. Walker: They regard themselves in an elite light and feel good about being in AP classes.

Ms. Bryant: We have a core of very bright children who are moving along despite the area not being a financially blossoming place. In any situation like ours, you're going to have that group who for whatever reason, whether it's genetics or faith, they're going after it, and they're going to get it.

Both counselors identified socioeconomic factors as strong influences in the lives of AP students. Neither counselor identified racial factors as affecting the school program, except in the context of poverty.

Ms. Walker: We have students who have left and really done things. We try to get those people back to talk with the children here. Many of the children here come from economically disadvantaged situations. Life may be more difficult for their families than for children from another area. If you're worrying about surviving, you might not have the leisure time necessary to excel academically.

Ms. Bryant: We draw on everything we've been exposed to in interpreting and analyzing material that is new to us. The broader the base of your experiences and exposures, then the more you have to put in to what you are learning, because we don't learn in isolation. I would think children from more affluent environments would have more to draw on and would be able to integrate the material.

In conclusion, the counselors identified socioeconomic factors as having significant influences on AP students' academic achievement. Many students had to work after school. For these students, work was not a choice but an economic necessity. Ms. Bryant said students at Baker did not perform as well academically as did students from more affluent schools because the burden of worrying about family finances affected academic performance. Also, budget problems at Baker impacted

the curriculum by limiting the AP classes which could be offered. In addition, top students often chose to leave Baker, which lowered the number of students left at Baker who could pass the AP exam. Finally, because top students left Baker and attended other schools, the grade curve changed so that less able students received As. This became a problem when students left Baker to attend college. "Some students get full scholarships, and drop out of college because the work is too hard," Ms. Baker said. Consequently, students at Baker who graduated at the top of the senior class were not always prepared for college level work.

Cross-Case Analysis

The information for this study was obtained from interviews, observations, photographs, and students' academic records at two schools serving racially and socioeconomically diverse student populations. The information was analyzed to assess how AP students in two AP classes in each school described the AP program at their schools. At each school used in this study, students in an AP English class and an AP American history class were interviewed. The teachers of the two AP classes at each school were also interviewed, as well as the vice principal and two guidance counselors.

In the section that follows, the information obtained from each school was compared and contrasted to answer the research study's purpose of finding out if differences in the AP programs at two schools can be explained by racial and

socioeconomic factors operating at the schools. This was done by answering each of the eight research questions which formed the basis for this study.

Research Question One: What are the AP Selection Criteria for Two High Schools Serving Racially Divergent Student Populations?

The selection criteria were different for the two schools. Anderson required a minimum of 75 percentile on the verbal portion of the PSAT exam or 90 percentile on the CTBS exam. Anderson also required a minimum of a B average in the prerequisite honors course and the recommendation from the honors teacher in the subject the student wished to take for AP credit. If a student did not meet the criteria for admission to AP, he or she was required to have his or her parents request a waiver. The waiver allowed the student into the AP course.

At Baker, standardized test scores were not required for admission to AP. A B average in the prerequisite honors course and the teacher's recommendation sufficed. If a student did not meet the criteria for AP admission, the student could be admitted to AP if he or she signed a contract in which the student promised to read selected materials in preparation for the AP curriculum.

Research Question Two: To What Extent is the Implementation of those Criteria Consistent Between the two Schools?

At Anderson, there was great consistency in the admission requirements. Students were discouraged by teachers from requesting waivers if they did not meet

minimum AP admission requirements. The teachers expected AP students to have the ability to read and write on the college level.

At Baker, AP admission requirements were flexible. Students who wanted to try AP courses were encouraged to do so, regardless of their scores on standardized tests. The vice principal and guidance counselors actively encouraged students, whom they believed lacked confidence and needed the knowledge that most of the students would not be able to pass the AP exam. However, students could still receive dual enrollment college credit. At Baker, students could try both options simultaneously, which was not true at Anderson.

AP admission criteria were consistent between the two schools in the requirement of previous honors courses and the minimum grade requirement of B. Students at both schools were also required to receive recommendations from teachers in previous honors courses.

However, there was much greater inconsistency than consistency in the implementation of admission criteria between the two schools. Students at Baker could easily override the AP admission criteria, whereas students at Anderson had to go through a waiver process. Each student seeking a waiver met with a guidance counselor, and his or her parents were required to attend the meeting. The guidance counselor discussed the student's academic record and the difficulty of the AP course. Finally, the parents and students were required to sign the waiver form.

Research Question Three: How do Students in the Two AP Programs Compare in their Previous Academic Preparation?

Students from both Anderson and Baker had been in honors classes since middle school. Both groups of students attributed the study skills learned in honors classes as instrumental in preparing them for work in AP classes. Specifically, students from both schools listed note taking and reading comprehension as their most valuable academic tools. Some students from Baker also named listening skills as important in preparing them for work in AP classes.

Both groups of students also attributed their own self-motivation as necessary preparation for AP work. They described themselves as disciplined and different from standard students whom they described as unconcerned about school and unmotivated to work hard. Some of the AP students at Baker participated in Upward Bound, a program to enhance the academic skills of low income students. Those who participated in Upward Bound said the program helped them improve their math and reading skills, and gave them practice for the SATs through computer tutorial programs.

Although both groups of students said their parents were proud of them and encouraged their success, parental support played a bigger role in preparing students for academic success for students at Anderson than at Baker. At Anderson, students said their parents were aware of their grades and concerned if grades dropped. Parents had high levels of trust in their children, and allowed them to direct their own

study habits. The parents were also actively involved in the students' college application process.

Students at Baker described a greater degree of separation from their parents. The parents cared about their children's progress and, like the parents at Anderson, trusted their children to organize their own study habits. However, the parents were described as more alienated from both the school and in working out the details for their children's futures. Students relied more on the guidance department than their parents for completing the college application process. Part of this was due to the heavier reliance on financial aid information. Students at both schools said their parents could not help them with some of their course work, but more parents at Anderson had attended college and had always expected their children to attend college. On the other hand, at Baker most of the parents had not attended college. Although Baker AP students said their parents expressed pride in their academic progress, the students' college expectations were derived from participation in honors classes and encouragement from teachers.

Whereas parents were a prime motivator for Anderson's AP students, the desire to escape their socioeconomic environment inspired many Baker AP students to do well academically. An often heard sentiment at Baker was "I want to make something of myself." Not 1 student at Anderson expressed that sentiment. Instead, students at Anderson were self-confident that they were already successful and would continue on that path, in accordance with their own and their parents' expectations.

Based on standardized test scores gained from cumulative folders at both schools, AP students at each school received different academic preparation throughout their school careers. Only 2 AP students from Baker met the admission criteria established for Anderson's AP students.

Research Question Four: How do the Teachers of AP Classes in Both Schools Compare in their Course Expectations, Grading Criteria, Descriptions of their Teaching Roles, and Goals in the Classroom?

The AP teachers at Anderson said they had no initial expectations, whereas the AP teachers from Baker described their expectations in behavioral terms. The teachers from Baker expected well behaved, motivated students who paid attention in class. At the end of the school year, the teachers at each school described their students very differently. Teachers at Anderson spoke of their students warmly and were full of praise for their students' intelligence, motivation, and polite behavior. Teachers at Baker described their students as "not AP material," "playful," "disrespectful," and "unwilling to work." At Anderson, both teachers graded students on a college level, and expected course mastery from their students. At Baker, both teachers said they could not teach or grade on a college level because the students were not academically prepared for college-level work. Concessions in grading were made for students' written language limitations.

At Anderson, both teachers described their teaching roles as giving their students encouragement and a college level curriculum. The teachers' assumptions were that most of the students were capable of receiving a college-level curriculum

and that AP students were highly motivated. At Baker, both teachers described their roles as preparing students for college freshman-level work. The teachers' assumptions were that most of their students were deficient in language skills and needed to be brought up to the college freshman-level.

The classroom goals of teachers at each school were different. The teachers at Anderson were extremely focused on preparing their students for success on the AP exam. At Baker, the teachers knew early in the year that most of their students would not take the AP exam, so their classroom goals did not center on the AP exam. The history teacher said his goal was to teach students to analyze information, and the English teacher said her goal was to teach students to interpret the material they read.

Standard teachers interviewed at both schools held the AP program in high esteem and were very similar in their descriptions of how they perceived the AP program. They expected AP students to be intelligent, motivated students. The standard teachers at both school described the AP curriculum as more detailed and involving more critical thinking than standard courses. Teachers at both schools described AP courses as taught on a college-level, and believed AP courses should be graded as college courses.

Standard teachers at both schools said the role of the AP teacher was to prepare students for college and to raise their performance. They stated the goal of AP was to have students successfully receive college credit for their AP course.

Standard teachers at both schools were also very similar in how they described standard classes. They said standard classes were difficult to teach because the

students had discipline problems, were unmotivated, and wanted high grades without putting forth effort. Standard students were also described as unrealistic in their future plans for college because they did not have the academic skills needed to successfully complete college. Standard teachers also said their jobs were made more difficult because they had to teach students with a wide range of skills in the same room. The standard curriculum was considered to have less depth than the AP curriculum, and the teachers' goals were to teach as much as possible to the varying ability levels in the room, while encouraging students to do their best.

The standard teachers at both schools viewed the AP students and AP teachers as slightly isolated from the rest of the school. This was due to the perceived elitism of the AP students, who consistently enrolled in classes for high achievers. The AP teachers were considered isolated because unlike standard teachers, they were perceived to not have disruptive or unmotivated students in their classes. Their descriptions of the AP students, teachers, and programs were very positive. The AP students were described as bright, motivated, and well behaved. The AP teachers were considered to be among the best teachers in the school, and the AP curriculum was believed to be on the college-level. These descriptions were held by teachers at Anderson and well as at Baker.

Research Question Five: How do the Two Schools Compare in the Implementation of Specific AP Test Preparation Methods?

There was a vast difference between the two schools in AP preparation methods. At Anderson, preparation for the AP exam was central to the curriculum

and both teachers reviewed the course content with their students for several weeks before the AP exam. The AP history teacher gave students daily review quizzes from the AP history review book for 14 consecutive days and held 3 after school review sessions. The AP English teacher gave students review sessions in class on test taking methods and gave students timed essay questions from past AP exams. Students' answers were then discussed and analyzed in class to help them improve their test taking strategies.

At Baker, both teachers realized early in the year that most of their students would not be able to pass the AP exam. In AP history, none of the students took the exam and there was only one review session during which the teacher provided questions and answers from a previous AP exam. In AP English, the teacher prepared the students for the AP exam on an ongoing basis with daily writing assignments or class discussions. However, she said only 2 of her students could possibly pass the exam, and she recommended that only those 2 students take the exam.

Research Question Six: What Characterizes Students' Descriptions and Evaluations of their AP Classes at the Two Schools?

Students at both schools said being treated as young adults by their AP teachers was the most outstanding aspect of being in AP classes. They also appreciated the studious atmosphere of the AP classes, the academic challenge, and the high expectations of their teachers. Students at both schools also said AP teachers

cared about the students, whereas both sets of students said most standard teachers did not care about students' academic performance.

Students at Anderson said there was a great difference between the behavior of standard students and AP students because standard students were immature and unmotivated and caused class disruptions. Students at Baker also described differences in behavior between AP students and standard students, but those differences were not as pronounced because AP classes at Baker also contained students who caused disruptions. Students at Anderson were adamant about their dislike for busy work and their appreciation for the lack of homework, other than studying, in AP classes. They likened AP to college classes because of the lack of homework. This aspect was not mentioned by any of the students from Baker.

Students from both schools said they appreciated the feedback they received from teachers about their work. However, students at Baker only said this about the AP English teacher, and they complained about the AP history teacher's lack of feedback and inconsistent grading practices. At Anderson, students said teachers trusted them to behave like adults, and were understanding and flexible if they did not have an assignment on time. At Baker, students said teachers would not accept late assignments. However, unlike students at Anderson, students at Baker interpreted the lack of flexibility in this area as high teachers' expectations.

Racial issues and how they affected the AP program were perceived from two different perspectives. At Anderson, racial factors were seen by how they affected the curriculum. The NAACP court case, which resulted in the banning of math and

science from the curriculum, left most of the AP students angry because they had to take difficult math and science courses without the benefit of college credit or weighted grades. The magnet program designed to attract minority students was commonly described as a failure by AP students because they said Anderson was not significantly integrated. Furthermore, they described the students in the International Studies program with the same negativity they used to describe standard students who misbehaved in class and did not care about their grades. Fights which erupted on campus were not viewed as racially motivated, but as the result of immaturity and personal arguments between students.

At Baker, racial issues were more personal. White students and African-American students sometimes taunted each other in class, fights erupted, and students sat together and socialized in their own racial groupings. Students made judgments about whether they thought teachers paid more attention to white students or African-American students.

There were differences in how students viewed the effects of socioeconomic factors on their school program. Students at Anderson were appreciative of the beauty of their school, and of how well equipped it was. They thought students from all backgrounds who were either spoiled or ignorant of proper behavior were responsible for vandalism at the school.

Students at Baker described the effects of socioeconomic factors at their school by what they did not have. They did not have a beautiful new school, nor were they fully supplied with new books or equipment. Their extracurricular activities were

curtailed due to lack of funds and they did not have a school newspaper. The school had a reputation, publicized by the media, of being a dangerous place, which upset many students who were loyal to their school and had lived in the same neighborhood all their lives. Vandalism was blamed on students who enjoyed destruction regardless of their socioeconomic status.

When asked to describe the ideal school, the main criterion for Anderson students was who would be excluded. They said students who were not interested in taking school seriously should not be allowed to attend. Several students suggested testing students for admission to the school. The ideal school would also contain a more efficient guidance department. At Baker, the main criterion for an ideal school was improved personal relationships. Students said the ideal school would also have more caring teachers, followed in importance by more caring students.

Students at both schools were personally affected by participation in AP through increased self-esteem. Students described themselves as active and productive in their leisure time and students at both schools belonged to clubs and had jobs. The major difference in how students spent their leisure time was in the amount of television they reported viewing. Students at Anderson reported watching an average of an hour of television a day, while students at Baker reported watching three hours a day.

The students at both schools were shown 12 photographs of different areas of their schools. The photographs' subjects were comparable at each school and students were asked to state whether they had a negative or positive response to each

photograph. Students at both schools had favorable responses to their school environments. Areas that students at Anderson and Baker identified with academic achievement, school spirit, attractive appearance, and friendship were all described as eliciting positive responses. However, despite a less privileged school environment, students at Baker had an overall more positive response to their school than students at Anderson. This may have been influenced by the fact that many students from Baker had lived in the neighborhood surrounding Baker most of their lives, and had attended the neighborhood elementary and middle school.

Both groups labeled seven pictures as positive. Anderson students labeled three pictures, the cafeteria, locker area, and guidance office, as negative. Baker students labeled only one picture, the picture of the AP history class, as negative. Also, several Baker students made comments such as "I love my school," while none of the Anderson students made such strong comments of loyalty to their school.

There were strong differences in the observations of the AP classes at both schools. At Anderson, AP classes resembled college freshman classes because students were quiet and attentive. At Baker, the students were openly disrespectful in the AP history class. In AP English, students were more well-behaved than in the AP history class, but they called out answers, walked across the room to communicate with peers, needed prodding to stay on task, and some students made inappropriate personal comments to the teacher.

Research Question Seven: How do AP Students' SAT, ACT, GPA, and AP Examination Scores Compare at the Two Schools?

Students' scores at each school were compiled and averaged in order to create a description of the average AP student at each school. The results showed great differences in students' scores in all categories. Many of the eleventh graders had not taken the SAT yet, but PSAT scores were available. The results of the PSAT were as follows in Baker High School: verbal, 35 or 29 percentile; math, 38 or 28 percentile; selection index, 109 or 29 percentile when compared to national scores. The selection index ranges from 60 to 240, and the national average score for juniors is 126. The selection index is used as an initial screen for scholarship eligibility. The PSAT results at Anderson High School were as follows: verbal, 50 or 80 percentile; math, 52 or 70 percentile; selection index 152 or 80 percentile.

SAT verbal and math scores were obtained from students' records. Possible maximum points were 800 in each test category, for a possible maximum composite score of 1,600. The SAT average scores for AP students at Baker were as follows: verbal, 393; math, 390; and composite score, 783. At Anderson, the average scores were as follows: verbal, 558; math, 574; and composite score, 1,132.

The highest possible ACT score is 36. The average ACT scores of students who took the exam at Baker were as follows: English, 18; reading, 18; math, 17; scientific reasoning, 18; and composite score, 18. At Anderson, the average scores were as follows: English, 26; reading, 27; math, 25; scientific reasoning, 25; and composite score, 26. When students received their scores, the scores were

accompanied by an explanation of how students ranked among other test takers in terms of acceptance to college. ACT scores were ranked from highest to lowest in terms of college admissions as follows: 27-31, highly selective, majority of accepted freshmen in top 10% of high school graduating class; 22-27, selective, majority of high school freshmen in top 25% of high school graduating class; 20-23, traditional, majority of accepted freshmen in top 50% of high school graduating class; 18-21, liberal, some freshmen from lower half of high school graduating class; 17-20, open, all high school graduates accepted, to limit of capacity. Out of five categories, Baker's students were in the lowest category, and Anderson's students were in the second to highest category.

The average weighted GPA at Baker was 3.11 and the average unweighted GPA was 2.94 out of a possible 4.0. The average weighted GPA at Anderson was 3.68 and the average unweighted GPA was 3.26. At both schools, GPAs that were weighted could rise above 4.0.

At Baker, no students took the AP History exam and two students took the AP English exam. One student passed the AP English exam with a score of 3. At Anderson, all students were required to take the exam. Of the 29 students in this study who took the AP history exam, 9 students passed the exam. Seven students made a score of 1, 13 students made a score of 2, 6 students made a score of 3, 3 students made a score of 4, and no students made a 5.

Of the 26 AP English students who took the AP exam, 20 passed. No students received a score of 1, 6 students received a score of 2, 14 students received a score of 3, 5 students received a score of 4, and 1 student received a score of 5.

Research Question Eight: How do AP Students' Academic Aspirations Compare at the Two Schools?

Students at Anderson gave clearer answers to questions about their academic aspirations than students at Baker. At Anderson, students were very focused on what they wanted out of their college educations. Some students had plans for graduate degrees. Students were able to discuss why they selected their colleges and career choices. When asked to name the career they wanted to pursue, a total of 19 careers were named.

At Baker, students were much more uncertain about their academic aspirations than students at Anderson. Some twelfth-graders who planned to attend college had still not applied for admission. Students' answers to questions about career aspirations were unclear and sometimes uninformed. For example, students who wanted to study business could not elaborate on what they wanted to do. Students who wanted to classes and students who wanted to study law had difficulty with language skills. By contrast, AP students at Anderson had more information about the requirements needed to fulfill their career ambitions than students at Baker. They also had a closer match between career choices and academic readiness to successfully pursue their career aspirations. However, AP students at both schools had high career aspirations.

In conclusion, AP students at both schools were similar in the personal satisfaction they derived from participation in the AP program, reliance on encouragement from parents and school staff, history of enrollment in honors courses, high academic aspirations, and the sense of elitism when compared with the general student population. Both groups of students also identified teachers as the ones responsible for setting the tone of encouragement or apathy in the classroom.

The AP students at both schools were different in the criteria they were required to meet for admission to AP classes, level of academic preparation, classroom behavior, rate of taking and passing the AP exam, degree of reliance on guidance counselors and parents for college and career advice, and achievement levels on standardized tests. Racial and socioeconomic factors affected students at Anderson only in relationship to the ban on offering AP math and science in the school. For students at Baker, racial factors affected students' interactions with each other and with teachers because the students were very sensitive to any real or perceived evidence of racism. Socioeconomic factors affected students at both schools by the physical condition of their schools, the curriculum offered, and how students described their acceptance and approval by the community.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter contains an overview of the study, findings, relationship of findings to previous research, implications of findings for research, implications of findings for practitioners, and recommendations. The research questions which guided this study were derived from research on the AP program and on African-American students' academic achievement.

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences in AP programs at two schools can be explained by racial and socioeconomic factors operating at the school level. The following questions guided data collection.

1. What are the AP selection criteria for two high schools serving racially divergent student populations?
2. To what extent is the implementation of those criteria consistent between the two schools?
3. How do students in the two AP programs compare in their previous academic preparation?
4. How do the teachers of AP classes in both schools compare in their course expectations, grading criteria, descriptions of their teaching roles, and goals in the classroom?

5. How do the two schools compare in the implementation of specific AP test preparation methods?

6. What characterizes students' descriptions and evaluations of their AP classes at the two schools?

7. How do AP students' SAT, ACT, GPA, and AP examination scores compare at the two schools?

8. How do AP students' academic aspirations compare at the two schools?

During the spring of 1993, a total of 101 students in two different school settings were observed. Observations occurred in two AP classrooms in each school, for a total of five observations in each class. Observation data were recorded by hand. Of those 101 students, 90 were interviewed. In addition, two AP teachers, two standard curriculum teachers, two guidance counselors, and a vice principal were interviewed at each school. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Photographs of the school settings were included as part of the interviews, and students' cumulative records were accessed to obtain available SAT, ACT, GPA, and AP examination scores. Data were collected and analyzed to find recurring themes and patterns which would enable the researcher to describe, compare, and contrast AP programs at two schools with different racial and socioeconomic compositions.

Findings

After conducting this study on AP classes in two schools with widely divergent racial and socioeconomic compositions, the researcher concluded that the AP program

served a different purpose in each school and that these different purposes were affected by the different racial and socioeconomic factors operating at each school. The differences in the purpose of the AP program at each school resulted from differences in admission criteria, academic level of AP students, AP teachers' expectations, AP test preparation, AP students' evaluations of the AP program, AP students' standardized test scores, and AP exam scores, and AP students' academic aspirations.

AP selection criteria and consistency of implementation of criteria were affected by the racial and socioeconomic composition of each school. Anderson High School, located in an affluent upper middle class neighborhood, had 26 students in the AP English class observed in this study, and 29 students in the AP American history class. Of those 55 students, 54 were white and 1 was African-American. Baker High School, located in an economically depressed neighborhood, had 16 students in the AP English class observed in this study, and 30 students in the AP American history class. Of those 46 students, 12 were white and 34 were African-American.

Based on results of standardized test scores, minority students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds who attended Baker did not have language skills or math skills comparable to students at Anderson. Baker's AP students scored lower on standardized test scores than Anderson's students, and all but 2 of Baker's AP students would have been denied admission to Anderson's AP classes based on Anderson's selection criteria. Also, students at Baker shied away from AP classes and were actively recruited for the classes, while qualified students at Anderson

sought admission to AP classes. Motivated, underqualified students at Anderson went through a waiver process with the participation of their parents in order to gain admission to AP.

After observing five class sessions in each AP class in this study, the researcher concluded that differences in admission procedures between the two schools created differences in classroom atmosphere. At Baker, where admission criteria were flexible and many students were coaxed or recruited into trying AP, students entered the class with doubts and fears about their ability to perform well. The AP teachers were fully aware of the students' academic achievement levels on standardized tests, and they also had doubts about the students' ability to perform well in college level subject matter. Consequently, a college-level atmosphere was not present in either AP class at Baker.

The atmosphere in the AP history class was apathetic on the part of the students, who claimed in turn that the teacher was apathetic about their performance in his class. The students perceived the teacher's expectations and investment in them to be so low that many students were uncommitted to learning the subject matter. They said the teacher offered little guidance and showed little interest in whether or not students mastered the course content. Students expressed no confidence in their ability to take the AP exam. The classroom atmosphere was also openly contemptuous of the teacher as students sometimes spoke disrespectfully to him or mocked him. Students ignored his directions to be quiet, talked frequently among themselves, and while the researcher was present, students did not follow instructions

on assignments. During interviews, many students said the teacher assigned daily seat work, did not interact with students, did not carefully grade work, and only lectured because of the presence of the researcher. Many students also expressed anger that they were expected to learn without instruction, and were consequently deprived of their education.

In conclusion, the atmosphere in the AP American history class included anger over what students described as unconcern on the part of the teacher, disrespect towards the teacher for failing to fulfill his role, and apathy over the course work because the teacher "does not teach." Despite the atmosphere of conflict between students and the teacher, there was also an atmosphere of humor and lightheartedness between students. Students joked with each other and helped each other find answers to questions in their assignments. However, the observer saw student conflict on three occasions. Twice students challenged each other over who would sit at a desk, and once a student who was angry at another student for teasing him called out an insult on his way out the door. Also, seating patterns showed clear racial segregation, although no racial comments were made and no animosity between students of different races was observed.

The AP English class at Baker had a different class atmosphere than the AP history class because students were generally quiet, on task, and respectful of the teacher. However, students expressed frustration over the difficulty of the work and needed frequent teacher interaction in order to complete their assignments. The teacher was continually involved with students on an individual and group basis. The

classroom atmosphere was friendly and relaxed, and students complied with the teacher's requests. During interviews, students expressed admiration for the teacher and pride in how their reading comprehension and writing skills had improved. They also enjoyed being treated as responsible adults by the teacher.

However, there was some off task behavior and the teacher frequently reminded students to stay on task. Some students also left their seats to speak to other students across the room, and 1 student was observed making an inappropriate remark to the teacher.

The classroom atmosphere in the AP English class and the AP American history class at Anderson differed from the classroom atmosphere in both AP classes at Baker. At Anderson, where admission criteria were firmly established by each department and unqualified students were discouraged from seeking waivers, students actively sought AP enrollment and entered AP with confidence and a sense of competition. The atmosphere in both observed AP classes was comparable to college classrooms. Students were attentive, on task, respectful of the teacher, and able to work independently. The room was very quiet while the teacher was speaking and students complied instantly with the teacher's instructions.

In both AP classes, the teachers were clearly the center of all that occurred and the students used peer pressure when needed to silence each other. Although the atmosphere was friendly, there was a formality of behavior when class was in session. Students raised their hands to speak, remained seated, and were attentive to the teacher when he or she spoke. During interviews, students from both classes

expressed admiration for their teachers and a strong need to receive the teachers' approval in return. Students had a strong awareness that they were deriving personal benefits from their AP classes. By comparison, at Baker students in AP English appreciated their improved skills, but did not have the same confidence as students at Anderson that the class was beneficial to their college careers.

The expected outcomes of AP at each school were different. At Baker, students entered AP with encouragement to try AP to see how they would perform, and with the knowledge that they could get dual enrollment college credit if they could not pass the AP exam. At Baker, students were able to enroll simultaneously in AP and dual enrollment. Dual enrollment was sponsored by the local junior college. The teacher was required to have a master's degree in the subject area in which he or she taught dual enrollment courses. If students were unable to take the AP exam at the end of the course, or if they took the AP exam and failed, they still had the option of receiving college credit for the course through dual enrollment. To receive dual enrollment credit, students were required to receive a minimum grade of C in the course and to pass the final exam prepared by the teacher.

At Anderson, students entered AP with the encouragement that they had passed high selection criteria, and with the knowledge they did not have dual enrollment as an alternative to AP credit if they did not pass the AP exam. Whereas students at both schools said they experienced some anxiety about their ability to do well in AP and expected hard work, many students at Baker, aware that they might

have some academic difficulty, said they were fearful when entering AP for the first time, while this statement was not heard from students at Anderson.

Differences in students' AP entry level ability at Baker and Anderson clearly indicated differences in previous academic preparation. Although students from both schools were identified as early as elementary or middle school as high ability students, they differed greatly in their ability to do college level AP work by the time they reached their junior year of high school. Students from both schools attributed study skills learned in honors classes, in particular reading and note taking, with doing well in AP, yet their academic outcomes were very different. AP students at Anderson scored above the national average on standardized achievement tests, while students at Baker scored below the national average. AP students at Baker, for example, scored on the average 329 points below AP students from Anderson on the SAT. Due to differences in academic preparation, students at Anderson were able to receive a college level AP curriculum in English and American history while students at Baker struggled with vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills.

In the intervening years between early identification as high ability students and high school, students' differing levels of academic achievement point to differences in the quality of education they received. Students at both Anderson and Baker, with few exceptions, remained in the same neighborhood all their lives. Three students from Baker moved temporarily to middle socioeconomic school environments, and then back to Baker. All 3 reported great difficulty with school work and lowered grades at their new schools, but all 3 students said their grades

improved dramatically when they returned to Baker. This indicated that schools in different socioeconomic environments set different standards for what constitutes excellence in students' achievement.

The AP curriculum, however, is designed for the highest ability students, irrespective of socioeconomic level, who are ready for college-level work. Students with inadequate academic preparation in preceding years are at a disadvantage from the beginning, and their educational gaps cannot be filled in an AP class that is by its nature fast paced and on a college level. Since most AP students in this study remained in the same neighborhood all their lives, their ability to successfully complete AP work reflected their educational environments.

Striking differences in previous academic preparation shaped AP teachers' expectations of their students. Teachers at Anderson had students in their classes who performed well on standardized tests and whose language skills were on a college level. These teachers praised their students' abilities and said their goal was to prepare students to pass the AP exam. Conversely, AP teachers at Baker had students in their classes who scored below the national average on standardized tests and who had difficulty with reading comprehension and writing skills. These teachers spoke about their disappointment with the lack of motivation shown by their students and the futility of their students taking the AP test. Their goal was to help students improve their academic skills to the point where they could be successful at college.

When teachers were asked to identify what they thought were the effects of racial and socioeconomic factors on the AP program, all teachers focused on

socioeconomic factors and none of the teachers identified racial factors as affecting student achievement. All the AP teachers and the standard teachers identified the effects of poverty as significant contributors to students' low academic success. Students from deprived backgrounds did not have the enriching experiences, freedom from financial burdens, and parental educational levels as students from higher socioeconomic environments, and therefore came to school with less general background knowledge and critical thinking skills than students from more affluent homes. Consequently, even though the teachers at Baker had the same curriculum as the teachers at Anderson, the teachers at Baker could not teach with the same depth and level of difficulty as the teachers at Anderson. Students' differences in academic preparation resulted in two AP programs which contained two functionally different curriculums and different intended outcomes.

In summary, lack of student preparation in Baker, a school with a predominantly African-American, low socioeconomic environment, had the effect of negating the purpose of the AP program. Students entered the program unprepared for college level work and at the course's completion, were unqualified to take the AP exam for college credit.

Although teachers at Baker said their AP students were unmotivated, playful, and had poor follow-through on assignments, the AP students faced a curriculum they had been poorly prepared to handle and entered AP with great reservations about their abilities to meet the course requirements. Despite these students' early identification as bright students, their academic skills were not challenged and developed in line

with their early academic promise. When discrepancies occurred between their earlier promise and their current skills, those discrepancies were not corrected. The higher achieving students in the lower socioeconomic schools continued in honors classes and continued to receive high grades without intervention when their skills began to fall behind the national average. In contrast, teachers at Anderson said their students were motivated, responsible, and high achieving. These AP students' skills had been continually challenged and developed throughout their school years, and students were continually evaluated and selectively admitted to honors classes. Consequently, they entered AP classes with confidence in their abilities.

Due to differences in entry level academic ability, teachers at Anderson prepared students to take the AP exam through reviews, quizzes, and practice exams. Conversely, teachers at Baker focused on improving students' skills to the college freshman level and did not expect students to take the AP exam. The Baker AP history teacher held one AP review session, and the AP English teacher did not provide a formal review session, but worked on developing students' skills through class assignments.

The differences in teachers' expectations resulted in two AP programs with very different outcomes. Both sets of teachers taught their curriculum according to the strengths and limitations of their students, but only the program at Anderson was in accordance with the original purpose of the AP program to provide college courses to high ability high school students.

Although the two AP programs were different, students at both schools derived personal satisfaction from participation in AP. They said they enjoyed the challenge of difficult classes and they identified being treated as adults by their teachers as a great source of self-esteem. AP students at both schools expressed a sense of elitism in how they spoke disparagingly of standard students, whom they perceived as disruptive and unconcerned about grades or future careers, and favorably of their peers, whom they described as hard working and goal oriented.

Despite favorable attitudes towards the AP program, African-American students were verbally challenged by other African-American students at both schools for their involvement in the AP program. Students claimed they were treated as if their involvement in AP were a form of betrayal to other African-American students. The students interviewed said students in standard classes described AP students as acting "high and mighty" and no longer needing their old friends. African-American students at both schools endured pressure from their peers to stay out of AP classes. Students who remained in AP said they learned to ignore peer pressure because they knew standard students were jealous of their success.

Racial factors which affected African-American AP students at Baker included their awareness of the negative portrayal of their school by the media and of negative racial stereotypes. Several students said they wanted to prove that African Americans could succeed, and rather than become angry at racism, they felt driven to try even harder to dispel stereotypes. One student said she felt so strongly about this that she corrected other students' grammar and told them they would eventually have to speak

standard English. AP English was very difficult for the majority of African-American students interviewed because when they entered AP they had not learned to write well enough to write a topic sentence. However, rather than show discouragement at the difficulty of AP English, their inability to take the AP exam, or the numerous rewrites they completed on their essays, the students were overwhelmingly receptive to the challenges of AP and enthusiastic about how their writing skills had improved through participation in AP. AP students at Anderson said there were no racial issues at their school which affected the AP program other than the banning of AP math and science from the AP curriculum as a result of the NAACP law suit.

African-American as well as white students at Baker described educational attainment as a means of improving their lives and becoming successful. They said they wanted better lives than their parents had, they wanted to look back on their choices without regrets when they were older, and they wanted to "make something" of themselves and have money. AP students at Baker viewed education as a means of upward social mobility as well as an escape from their current environment. At Anderson, AP was viewed by students as a means of becoming more competitive within their own environment. They spoke admiringly of students who scored 1300 or above on the SAT, and said they always assumed unquestioningly that they would attend college, in accordance with their parents' wishes.

In summary, students at Baker had high stakes invested in their education because education meant an entire change of lifestyle. For students at Anderson, educational attainment meant more prestige, but not necessarily more affluent

lifestyles. Instead, education would help them maintain their current levels of affluence.

Despite the greater changes in lifestyles that could result from educational attainment for students at Baker, few benefited fully from the AP program because their inadequate educational preparation in previous grades left them unable to take the AP exam. Previous academic preparation also affected college admission and completion. Students from the high-minority, low socioeconomic school setting were unprepared to compete for college admission on equal footing with students from the low-minority, high socioeconomic school setting. The highest achieving students at Baker had standardized test scores which were below the minimum required for entrance into the state university system, and once in college, faced a high drop-out rate. In brief, the means perceived by AP students at Baker for social mobility was higher education, yet they were not adequately prepared for competition with other students for admission into higher education or academic success once in college.

Finally, students' aspirations were also affected by racial and socioeconomic factors. Students at both schools had high academic aspirations and said they wanted to attend college and enter professions. However, students at each school were different in their degree of specificity about their goals and their perceptions of what was needed to attain their career aspirations. Students at Anderson were overall specific about which careers they wanted to enter, the course of study required to meet their goals, and what they wanted to accomplish after graduation from college.

Students at Baker tended to have general career goals which did not extend past having picked a major, or narrowing their choices to two career fields.

Many more parents of Anderson's AP students had attended college and had professional jobs than parents of students from Baker. Consequently, parents of students at Anderson were able to provide their children with information about what was needed to be successful academically and in a career, and they exerted guidance based on experience. Conversely, few of the AP students from Baker had parents who attended college. They guided their children by encouraging them to improve their lives and surpass their parents.

The major effect of the discrepancy of parental academic and socioeconomic achievement levels was in the degree of accurate information parents could offer their children to help them prepare for their futures. Consequently, students from Anderson, whose parents guided their children based upon personal experience, had realistic information about how to achieve their goals. These AP students did not question college as an option, and praised their parents for keeping them motivated and competitive.

Students at Baker, on the other hand, seemed unaware of the degree of competition needed to succeed both academically and professionally. Although some students voiced fear about not being able to write well in college and many students were reluctant to discuss their standardized test score, they did not seem to view themselves as at a disadvantage when compared to other college students. These AP students had high academic aspirations despite deficiencies in language skills that

could lead to potential disappointment and the need for further remedial work to continue college studies. Only 1 student said she expected to fail college and return home, but this was the only student interviewed at Baker who said she did not care about school.

Some of the career paths chosen by students from Baker would be difficult to obtain when viewed in the perspective of their standardized achievement test scores. The students did not voice an understanding of how low their scores were and what this predicted about their ability to complete college-level work. One student told the researcher he did very well on the SAT, even though his composite score was below 800. None of the students discussed their scores as significantly below average or as indicating problems in chosen careers which required high skills in math or language. Also, unlike students at Anderson, students at Baker had limited personal contact with professionals who had achieved in the career field in which they were interested. They relied on guidance counselors and teachers for information. This left them at a disadvantage when planning how to attain their goals because they did not receive the personal attention in career planning that students from Anderson received. Despite differences in the AP programs in two schools with different racial and socioeconomic compositions, the AP program benefited students at both schools.

At Anderson, students received a college curriculum, college credit if they passed the AP exam, and encouragement and guidance in planning their career paths. At Baker, the AP program served a different function. These students entered the program with socioeconomic and experiential disadvantages. They did not have the

inherited privileges of students from more affluent backgrounds. They had not experienced travel, cultural enrichment, or high educational attainment from members of their families. Consequently, they were not prepared to receive the full benefits of participation in the AP program.

However, benefits from participation in AP did exist for these students. Students improved their academic skills, they expressed pride in attempting difficult material, and they received college information and encouragement from teachers in pursuing college admission. Finally, participation in AP, even without the benefit of passing the AP exam, enhanced college admission for Baker's students because colleges seeking minority recruitment looked favorably upon students who made the effort to take AP courses.

Relationship of Findings to Previous Research

The results of this study are related to previous research on the AP program and minority academic achievement. The literature on the AP program, minority participation in the AP program, and high achieving minority students guided this research and is related to the present study.

The AP Program

The purpose of the AP program was different for each school in this study. Nationally, the goal of the AP program is to accelerate the educational process for high ability students so they may earn college credit while in high school (Maeroff,

1983). However, this goal was actualized at Anderson but not at Baker. At Baker, the goal of the AP program was to upgrade students' skills so they would be prepared for their first year of college. Another major objective of the AP program is to prepare students for the AP exam so they may receive college credit (Oakes & Lipton, 1990, p. 204). Again, this objective was only true of Anderson, where all students were required to take the AP exam. At Baker, only 2 students took the AP exam.

Across the nation, African-American students have had a low rate of success on the AP exam (Institute for Independent Education, 1989). The rate of African-American students from Baker who took the AP exam during this study was lower than the national percentage reported in 1988. At Baker, only 2 students out of 46 took the AP exam, or 4%, while the 1988 national average was 35%. Only 1 student from Baker who took the AP exam, or 50% passed, consistent with the national average passing rate of 49% of African Americans who take the AP exam.

The research also attested to low SAT scores by African-American students, which is important because SAT scores are considered in college admission. In the state in which this study was conducted, average SAT scores for African-American students for the 1991-1992 academic year were 385 on the verbal section, 351 on the math section, with an average composite score of 736, or 160 points below the national average of 896. SAT scores for AP students at Baker were 783, or 47 points higher than the national average scores for African-American students but still 113

points below the national average SAT scores ("National SAT Marks," 1991) and 329 points lower than the scores of AP students at Anderson.

The researcher's findings were consistent with the literature. Students at Baker had lower college readiness levels, as evidenced by their SAT scores, than students at Anderson. This is significant because African-American students have lower rates of college attendance than white students, and once in college, the percentage of African-American students who complete college is low (Summers, 1990). The highest rates of college completion for African-American students have been in primarily African-American institutions, and few students from low socioeconomic backgrounds attend any postsecondary institutions (Wilson-Sadberry et al., 1991).

In view of the low college attendance and completion rates among African-American students and the effect of low socioeconomic status on college attendance, AP becomes an important vehicle for identifying and enhancing the skills of low socioeconomic, capable African-American students. However, low socioeconomic African-American students identified as capable in elementary and middle school continue to perform poorly on standardized tests, which raises questions as to why their educational preparation has not kept pace with their identified potential.

Low test scores and inadequate academic preparation jeopardizes African-American AP students' chances of gaining admission to selective colleges, and once in college, of being able to complete their four years of study to graduate.

These students also miss the benefits of AP participation which are enjoyed by AP students who entered the program academically prepared to receive its benefits. For example, AP students have been shown in studies to outperform college students in subject matter exams (Harris & Galitsis, 1980) and to have an advantage in college admission not only in public institutions (Dillon, 1986) but in private institutions as well (Talley, 1989).

AP students who receive passing grades in their AP courses but do not take the AP exam, or take it and fail, are viewed by college admissions officer as coming from schools where grade inflation is the norm (Hershey, 1990). If this is the case, AP students at Baker not only missed the benefits of college credit, a superior curriculum, and increased competitiveness for college admissions, but might be seen by college admissions officers as having received inflated grades because of their failure to take the AP exam while passing the AP course.

Minority Participation in Advanced Placement

Nationally, participation of minorities in AP continues to rise (Vital Statistics, 1991). This trend was also true in Baker, where the more able students were actively encouraged to take AP courses and willing students were not denied access to AP, even if they did not meet the admission criteria. The administration at Baker made an effort to find the most qualified teachers among its faculty to teach AP and to encourage the growth of the program. Ancarrow (1990) reported in his study that schools with the highest proportion of minorities (75% or higher) had no AP

programs. However, Baker had a 72.3% African-American student population and offered three AP courses.

Frasier (1991) said the identification of talented African-American students was hampered by their experiential deprivation and limited language development. Teachers at Baker identified these same two factors as the greatest academic impediments their AP students faced. Conversely, a wealth of background experiences and language proficiency were identified by teachers at Anderson as attributes which made their students successful in completing AP course work.

High Achieving Minorities

The literature identified parental achievement, quality interaction among family members, strong parental values and expectations, and self-perceived academic ability as related to academic success in African-American students (Johnson, 1992; Prom-Jackson, 1987; & Slaughter-Defoe et al., 1990). Students at Baker and students at Anderson differed in these areas. The parents of students at Baker were mainly employed in low paying jobs and some parents worked more than one job in order to support the family. Almost none of the parents had college educations. By comparison, the parents of students at Anderson had achieved high or moderately high socioeconomic status through their jobs, and almost all parents had attended college, graduated from college, or were currently attending college.

Students at both schools praised their parents for encouraging them in school and motivating them to pursue college educations. However, students at Baker

discussed the hardships of coming from homes where parents sometimes worked two jobs or night shifts because their parents were often tired and there was less time for personal interaction. Also, very few of the students at Baker came from two parent homes and some students had not seen their fathers in years and did not know where they were.

The situation was very different at Anderson. Only 4 students from Anderson discussed difficulties with quality interaction with their parents. Two of these students lived independently, the third student lived alone with her father because her mother died, and the fourth student expressed great personal anger at his father due to his father's favoritism towards a sibling. The girl who lived with her father spoke of him very favorably, but said she had little time with him due to his work schedule. Many of the students at Anderson spoke of family activities, such as trips to museums, which encouraged them in childhood to value education.

Parental expectations for students' success was often different in the two school settings. At Anderson, parental expectations for students' success were based on parental experience with career success, which was often not true of Baker's students. However, students at both schools reported that their parents were proud of them and encouraged them to pursue plans to attend college.

The researcher found that AP students at both schools had confidence in their academic abilities. However, consistent with the literature, a wide gap existed between actual educational attainment and students' aspirations, and this gap was much wider for African-American students than for white students (Solorzano, 1992).

In summary, the factors identified in the research which contribute to academic success in African-American students was actually found in greater abundance in the predominantly white, high socioeconomic school setting.

The research also identified a relationship between socioeconomic status and achievement test scores. In addition to low SAT scores and low rates of passage on the AP exam, research also verified a close relationship between ACT scores and socioeconomic status (Kerr et al., 1992). Students at Baker scored an average of 18 on the ACT out of a possible 36 points. This was 8 points lower than the average AP student's score of 26 points at Anderson.

Another finding of the study was the personal conflict experienced by African-American students who were high achievers. According to the literature, these students were accused of "acting white" by their peers (Fordham, 1985) or "raceless" to gain teacher acceptance (Fordham, 1986). Sometimes this pressure resulted in rejection of the dominant culture (Ogbu, 1990) or "bicultural identity" coping behaviors (Clark, 1991). African-American students at both schools experienced peer conflict when they became members of high achieving classes. At Baker, students discussed the conflict, and said they learned to ignore it. At Anderson, there was only 1 African-American student in the two AP classes observed in this study. This student did not report conflict, but conflict among other AP African-American students was observed by the AP history teacher.

Students at both schools said they had been in honors classes since middle school. Consequently, these students had the same peer group throughout their school

years. Participation in the college track was found to have a positive effect on student achievement due to peer influence with similarly college bound, achievement oriented students (Hallihan & Williams, 1991; Kilgore, 1991; & Wilson-Sadberry et al., 1991). Students at both schools spoke of the enjoyment and benefits of having peers who were among the highest achievers in their schools. They also spoke with respect for each other's achievements, and some students said friendly competition with their peers motivated them to work hard for their grades.

Implications of Findings to Research

Very few school programs were found in the research which focused on minorities with high academic potential. One such program was Ventures in Education (Raices & Braestrup, 1991), and another was PRIME (Keller, 1990). Greater research into the few existing successful programs would help educators identify factors which made those programs successful. Educators could then emulate those programs in the public and private school systems.

The research also indicated that African-American AP students who attended private schools had a 61% success rate on the AP exam, which was near the national norm of approximately 70%, compared to the 35% passage rate of African-American AP students in public schools (National Institute for Independent Education, 1986). Research which compared private and public school AP programs to identify factors which contribute to African-American success on AP exams would benefit public

school educators concerned about differences in AP exam rates among minority groups.

Implications of Findings to Practitioners

The earlier research, as well as this study, indicated that African-American students demonstrated a wide disparity between their aspirations and their actual academic achievement. Educators and guidance counselors need to be aware of this disparity and to guide African-American students in the setting of goals. They also need to provide students with frequent and accurate information on what is needed to attain their goals.

African-American students in this study entered the AP program unprepared for college level work. Consequently, only 2 students out of all the students in the low socioeconomic school took the AP exam, and only 1 passed. Practitioners need to examine why the highest achieving African-American students in high-minority, low socioeconomic environments can complete 11 to 12 years of public education and still function way below average on language and math skills needed for academic success. Current school programs in low socioeconomic school settings do not seem to provide African-American students with skills needed to function on grade-level.

The research as well as this study indicated that African-American AP students experienced conflict between allegiance to their ethnic group and the academic success identified with the white culture. Educators need to be sensitive to this conflict and

guidance counselors and teachers need to educate all students on how to find congruence between academic success and one's ethnic identity.

Recommendations

Identified factors which lead to academic success in minority students must be implemented in programs which begin in elementary school. Of particular concern, based on standardized tests, is the deficiency in language skills in high achieving African-American students. Due to inadequate language skills, AP African-American students in this study were unable to fully benefit from the AP program at their school. One recommendation is the greater use of the whole language approach to the curriculum, beginning in elementary school, so that African-American students can learn and reinforce language skills in all subject areas. The quality of the curriculum needs to be evaluated when African-American students who have been identified as high achievers begin to fall behind the national average in standardized tests. Academic deficiencies need to be corrected immediately in earlier years so they do not create major obstacles to higher education in later years.

The education of parents concerning their children's educational needs is also recommended. School administrators and guidance counselors need to find ways to motivate parents to come to school to find out how their children are progressing academically. Parents also need to be informed on how to interpret their children's standardized test scores so they will understand their children's educational needs.

Parents would then also be in a better position to help their children plan for their future career choices.

Teachers should teach students to value academic success and accept the success of others, without racial intolerance. Guidance counselors need to be openly available to counsel with African-American students about peer and racial identity conflict related to academic success.

College bound African-American students must be made aware by teachers and guidance counselors of the high college drop-out rate among African-American students. This link between aspirations and a realistic appraisal of ability is needed if students are to be motivated to improve their academic skills. Otherwise, uninformed efforts can lead to failure and discouragement. The goal of educators is to motivate students to learn. This study points to the need for educators to continually clarify to students and their parents what is needed for AP African-American students to set goals and attain those goals.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

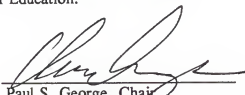
Lorraine Miller was born in Fort Mammoth, New Jersey, on June 16, 1953, the second of four children. She was raised in Connecticut, New York City, and Florida. Ms. Miller graduated from Nova High School in Davie, Florida, in 1971.

Ms. Miller graduated with high honors from the University of Florida in 1976 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She spent the following seven years raising her two children.

In 1983, Ms. Miller began teaching juvenile delinquents at the Duval Detention Center in Jacksonville, Florida, as a Chapter One reading teacher. During this time, she entered graduate school at the University of North Florida and in 1986, she earned her master's degree in education.

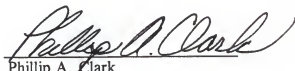
From 1986 until the present time, Ms. Miller has taught at Daniel Memorial, a residential treatment center for severely emotionally handicapped children and teenagers. She has taught elementary, middle school, and high school age students and was voted teacher of the year by her peers at Daniel Memorial in 1989. Ms. Miller earned her doctorate from the University of Florida in the spring of 1994.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



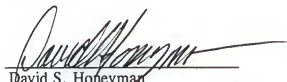
Paul S. George, Chair
Professor of Educational
Leadership

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Phillip A. Clark
Professor of Educational
Leadership

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



David S. Honeyman
Associate Professor of Educational
Leadership

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Edward C. Turner
Associate Professor of Instruction
and Curriculum

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

April, 1994


Dean, College of Education

Dean, Graduate School